

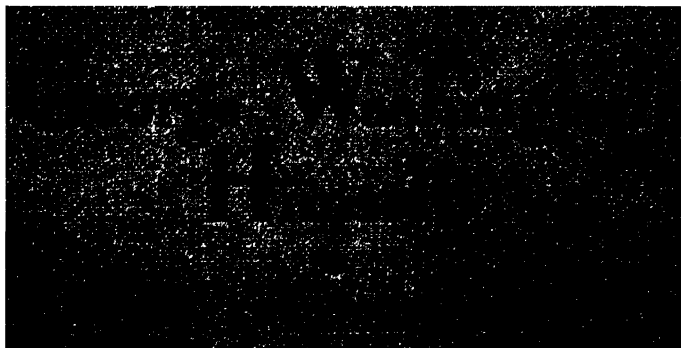
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GEORGE WASHINGTON

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GEORGE WASHINGTON HIMSELF

*A Common-Sense Biography
Written from His Manuscripts*

BY

JOHN C. FITZPATRICK, L.H.D., Litt. D.

Editor, United States Bicentennial Commission Edition
of The Writings of George Washington



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TO THE TWO BETTYS

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FOREWORD

THERE has existed for some years an attitude among the older American historians that the history of our Revolutionary War has been completely told and that, as a subject, it has been practically written out. Nothing is further from the truth, and the story of George Washington has suffered from this bland complacent attitude. Complacency, never a very commendable trait in any line of endeavor, is an especially fatal attitude in the historian, and Washington's remark to President Henry Laurens, of the Continental Congress, over an episode of the Conway Cabal, fairly well describes the attitude of those who are indifferent, or opposed, to continued research into the politics of the Continental Congress and the story of George Washington: "My Enemies," wrote Washington, "take an ungenerous advantage of me; they know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defence I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks." This studied, or "insidious," indifference to further research into the story of the Revolution is a negative attack upon Washington, for until the full story of the anti-Washington clique in the Continental Congress is truthfully presented the history of the American Revolution has not been finished.

The great mass of George Washington manuscripts has been ignored, or given but superficial attention by biographers, under the comforting belief that the two editions of his Writings (one by Jared Sparks of twelve volumes and one by Worthington C. Ford of fourteen volumes) contain all of his important letters. The truth of the matter is that both of these publications, taken together, contain less than half of Washington's letters and that the unpublished material contains as heavy a percentage of important letters as the published. Because of this there has been a large amount of romancing about Washington, romancing being a much simpler, easier and speedier way of writing his life than assimilating the full truth by laborious research among an enormous collection of manuscripts. It is a matter of amazement that biographers could

think that the story of George Washington has been told, merely because so many enthusiastic writers have cheerily rushed into print with so-called complete lives of the First American while less than half of the facts were at their command. A George Washington has thus been created in the public mind who is, unfortunately, utterly unlike the real man yet who is, again unfortunately, cherished by that public to such an extent that it refuses to accept anything which contradicts or omits the false proportions or misplaced high lights of the accustomed portrait. If the cherished, but palpably untrue is omitted the biographer is set down as knowing very little about Washington; if the untruths are alluded to and strange new facts substituted therefor the biographer is almost forced into argumentative discourse, which is well nigh fatal to good biography.

This Life of Washington may appear disproportionately attentive to the periods of the French and Indian War and the Revolution, but Washington's early years upon the Virginia frontier were his character-forming years and the Revolution was the test by fire which proved that character's worth. These periods are necessarily more valuable for presenting a true picture of the man than any other. The period of the Presidency, vitally important as it was to America, was to Washington, more of a steadfast application of the principles developed in colonial and revolutionary days, than a further development of George Washington himself. For this reason the Presidency has not been treated in as much detail as the two former periods; also, though it is extremely difficult to keep close to Washington during the Revolution without slipping unconsciously into the story of that war, it is much more difficult to tell the story of President George Washington without making it the history of the United States for that period.

It has been difficult at times to exercise restraint in describing the obstacles deliberately placed in Washington's path by those who should have cooperated with him whole-heartedly, and if some of these conditions have here been dealt with bluntly it has been solely for the purpose of making clear that George Washington had to fight, not only the open enemies of his country, but peculiar friends as well. There is nothing either startling or shocking, after all, in the knowledge that human nature was pretty much the same in the last quarter of the eighteenth century as it is now in the second quarter of the twentieth, and if we can see plainly

the workings of selfishness, greed, egotism and ambition in the Revolution and afterward, we can better understand the tremendous work George Washington accomplished for the liberty of his country. There is no need to exalt Washington by belittling his contemporaries (though his contemporaries, many of them, attempted to exalt themselves by belittling him) ; but there is need, at all times in the interest of truth, to refrain from crediting some of those contemporaries with patriotic virtue they did not possess.

The usual citations of historical authority encountered such peculiar mechanical obstacles because of the present condition of the Washington manuscripts and the progressive issuance of the volumes of the Bicentennial Edition of Washington's Writings that I have been forced to rest content with a mere note of the date of the letters and documents quoted. All of these will appear, in due course, in their chronological order in that edition, which will print, for the first time, many thousands of Washington's writings. It seemed useless also to submit the usual bibliography of printed authorities, when so few of them really deserve consideration as "authorities." Of the dozens of works consulted, the quantity of dependable facts gathered was found to be woefully slight, when checked against the authority of the manuscript records of George Washington and the Continental Congress.

This biography endeavors to explain simply the underlying causes of the difficulties and obstacles which George Washington encountered during his public services and, in this wise, help to make clearer the character of the man without whom the American Revolution and the establishment of the United States as a nation would have failed.

JOHN C. FITZPATRICK

Washington, D. C.

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GEORGE WASHINGTON HIMSELF

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GEORGE WASHINGTON HIMSELF

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

IN THE YEAR 1657 OR THEREABOUTS,
AND DURING THE USURPATION
OF
OLIVER CROMWELL

John and Lawrence Washington—Brothers

Emigrated from the north of England, and settled at Bridges Creek, on Potomac River, in the County of Westmoreland. But from whom they descended the subscriber is possessed of no document to ascertain.

John Washington was employed as General against the Indians in Maryland, and as a reward for his services was made a Colonel and the Parish wherein he lived was called after him. He married Ann Pope, and left issue two Sons, Lawrence and John, and one daughter Ann, who married Major Francis Wright. The time of his death the subscriber is not able to ascertain, but it appears that he was Interred in a Vault which had been erected at Bridges Creek

Lawrence Washington, his eldest son, married Mildred Warner, daughter of Colo. Augustine Warner, of Gloucester County, by whom he had two Sons, John and Augustine and one daughter named Mildred. He died in 1697 and was interred in the family Vault at Bridges Creek.

Augustine, son of Lawrence and Mildred Warner, married Jane

Butler, the daughter of Caleb Butler of Westmoreland, April 20, 1715, by whom he had three Sons Butler (who died young) Lawrence and Augustine and one daughter Jane, who died when a child. Jane, wife of Augustine, died Novr. 24th, 1728, and was buried in the family Vault at Bridges Creek.

Augustine then married [Mary] Ball, March 6, 1730: by whom he had issue George, born February 11th (old style), 1732; Betty, born June 20th, 1733; Samuel, born Novr. 16, 1734; John Augustine born Jany. 13, 1735; Charles, May 1, 1738; and Mildred, June 21, 1739; who died Octr. 28th, 1740. Augustine departed this life April 12, 1743, aged 49 years and was interred at Bridges Creek in the Vault of his Ancestors.

Thus wrote George Washington to Sir Isaac Heard, Garter King of Arms, in London, May 2, 1792, in answer to a request for the genealogical record of the Washington Family. And this account, for all practical purposes, is satisfactory.¹

Washington's birthday is now, and properly, February twenty-second, but like many other things concerning him has been the subject of much misstatement. He was born February eleventh and his birthday was February eleventh, every year from 1732 to 1752. After 1752 his birthday fell upon February twenty-second. This shifting of an apparently fixed date was caused by Great Britain's refusal, up to 1752, to accept the Gregorian calendar. Continental Europe adopted Pope Gregory's scientific revision of the unsatisfactory calendar of Julius Cæsar, in 1582; but England refused to have anything to do with a papist calendar reform, though that reform had nothing whatever to do with things religious. This anti-calendar-reformation produced the English mummery celebration of Twelfth Night in derision of the Christmas date established by Gregory's calendar. Harmonious trade relations were more necessary than an indulgence of religious prejudice and the English found their pounds, shillings and pence involved to such an extent that their merchants accepted the Continental time record without demur, and salved their surrender with the futile gesture of double dating their years from January first to March twenty-fifth.

All this concerned George Washington only to the extent of a shifted birthday after the year 1752.

Not quite two months after February 11, 1732 (April fifth, to be exact), the first child of Augustine and Mary Ball Washington was baptized according to the rites of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia and was named George, in compliment to Major George Eskridge, who had been the guardian of the orphaned Mary Ball. Beverley Whiting, a distant relative by marriage and Captain Christopher Brooks were god-fathers and Mrs. Mildred Gregory, Augustine Washington's sister, was godmother.² Details are lacking of this interesting event and we do not know whether it occurred at the Bridges Creek homestead or at the parish church.

Much has been conjectured of George Washington's life up to the time of his father's death, in 1743, and unfortunately, more time and energy have been spent in evolving these conjectures than in analyzing the few documentary records that do exist. Whatever foundations there may have been for such nonsensical stories as the cherry tree and the fiery colt, have long since crumbled and it is absurd to give them a moment's thought. It is not necessary to strain for effects in the story of George Washington. Everything for which documentary proof does not exist may be discarded without regret, for the provable facts that remain support a life and character more than satisfactory to the most ardent admirer and more than sufficient to suppress the vain activities of the most captious critic.

George Washington's education had well begun before his father died for, by the age of eleven, he could write a fair and legible, if unformed and sprawling, juvenile hand and had made some progress in the elements of arithmetic. The beginning of this education, the identity of his teacher, or the school he attended, if indeed he attended a school, can not now be traced.³ The documentary evidence that it has survived is unequal to the demand made upon it, though it partly justifies the common-sense idea that Augustine Washington, up to the time of his death in 1743, and Lawrence Washington, after he returned from the Cartagena expedition, had a great deal to do with young George's training and that they were, probably, the principal factors in his education.

Such of George Washington's school exercises as have survived indicate this. One distinct group of these overlaps another distinct group in a curious manner, with the apparent dates of the two groups corre-

sponding to those of the death of Augustine and the assumption of the task of teaching by Lawrence, or others.

It is disappointing that the documentary records of these critical and character-forming years do not furnish a clear picture of George Washington's mental and moral development. The glib stories of his physical prowess, of his studious habits, of the exciting, colt-breaking episode, of his marshaling school companions in military play and of the buzz caused by his "romping" with one of the older girls of the school, are all apocryphal tales built upon and descending from the fame that came to him in his later years.⁴

It is not difficult to understand that had there been no fame, there would have been no stories.

Washington's school exercises are the only authentic source of our meager knowledge and it is strange that they have not been carefully studied and analyzed before this. They are written in ink, in home-made blank books of paper sheets, folded to about nine by eleven inches and stitched with thread. They probably had thick paper covers, but these covers have long since disappeared.⁵

Washington's earliest surviving exercises are in arithmetic and are concerned with the multiplication of feet and inches in what is quaintly called the "Mensuration of Superficies" (the old name for surface dimensions). After fractions, both natural and "vulgar," the exercises plunge into decimals and from these into simple and compound interest and geometry. There is no evidence that Washington was acquainted with algebra, but he did know square root and plane trigonometry (which he wrote as "plain"), and he understood the use of logarithms. But there are more exercises in geometry and surveying than any of the other branches of mathematics.

The second group of the school exercises that have survived, is dated and signed by Washington, August 13, 1745; it overlaps and to a considerable extent duplicates the geometrical and survey exercises in the first or earlier group. The overlapping and similarity of the geometry and survey work could be accounted for on the premise that George's half-brother put him through a review to discover just how much the boy did know and, after that, carried his pupil forward according to his own ideas. These ideas, as Lawrence had the benefit of more recent instruc-

tion from the Appleby school in England, were broader in scope than those in which George had progressed under his father's tutelage,⁶ but they were decidedly similar in character.

It may be presumed also that it was Augustine Washington's intention to give his eldest son, by his second marriage, the same educational advantages of the Appleby school that he had given his eldest son by his first marriage. He had attended this school himself and could easily, therefore, have trained George in the elemental branches for an Appleby entrance and, after Augustine's death, Lawrence could have continued the training even though it had become clear by then that it was impracticable to send young George abroad.

From the meager documentary evidence surviving, George Washington's school-days ranged approximately from his seventh or eighth year (1739-40) to his fourteenth or fifteenth year (1746-47), seven or eight years of schooling in all, though it is well to remember that he was observing, comparing, analyzing and thinking throughout all of his busy life.

His school exercises give a fair idea of the educational equipment with which he started life. One of the books contains copies of a collection of business forms and legal instruments. Among these were the forms of a promissory note; a bill of exchange; various kinds of bonds, judgment, arbitration and land transfer; a general release; a servant indenture; a bill of sale; power of attorney; deed of gift; conveyance; lease of land and a short will, with a note of the differences that should be found in a will made in England and one made by an Englishman in France. In the same exercise book with these business forms are entered the well-known *Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation*.⁷

The Rules are precisely the kind of homilies that might be expected from an English school of the eighteenth century. They, very likely, were well known to both Augustine and Lawrence and were handed on to George along with a poem on Christmas and one entitled *True Happiness*, all of which the young scholar dutifully copied out in his exercise book. In the attempt to identify the source of the Rules, the probable reaction to them by Washington has been generally overlooked. His conduct, in after life, so closely parallels many of their precepts that the influence should not be entirely ignored, though no definite claim can be made as to its extent. Youth, in Washington's time, took precepts more seriously

than now. There was a decided strain of romance in the make-up of George Washington (a strain that has been ignored or lost sight of in the unjustifiable effort to establish him as superman), and it was precisely to this romantic strain that these Rules strongly appealed. The seventeenth Rule—"Be no Flatterer"—hardly needs comment as Washington's sincerity can never justly be questioned.

The nineteenth Rule—"Let your countenance be pleasant but in serious Matters Somewhat grave"—seems to have become a settled habit by the time he was twenty-eight, for Captain George Mercer wrote of him in 1760: "In conversation he looks you full in the face, is deliberate, deferential and engaging."

Of the twenty-second Rule, Washington certainly acquired the spirit—"Show not yourself glad at the Misfortune of another though he were your enemy." Whether he remembered this or not, he showed genuine sympathy for Rahl at Trenton; for Burgoyne, after the latter's defeat and for Cornwallis at Yorktown, and the generous remark as to Gates's failure at the battle of Camden⁸ was decidedly more than most men would have conceded.

The thirty-ninth Rule—"In writing or Speaking, give to every Person his due title According to his Degree and the Custom of the Place"—was rarely broken by Washington for in all the thousands of letters which he wrote to persons of high and low degree, in both military and civil life, he miscalled titles scarcely a dozen times.

The forty-fourth Rule—"When a Man does all he can, though it Succeeds not well, blame not him that did it"—became a firm fixture in Washington's mind, though this fixation may have been helped by his later acquaintance with Addison's *Tragedy of Cato* fully as much as to the old Jesuit rule of civility. In dealing with his officers and subordinates failure never brought criticism or reprimand from Washington where he was convinced that an honest effort had been made.

Tobias Lear's account of Washington's self-mastery of his rage at St. Clair's blundering defeat by the Indians fits perfectly with the fifty-eighth Rule: "... and in all causes of Passion admit Reason to Govern."

The one hundred and eighth Rule—"When you speak of God or his Attributes let it be Seriously and [with] Reverence"—was certainly remembered. Though in his letters Washington used the word God very

seldom, his references to the Almighty, the Ruler of the Universe, Providence or the Supreme Being, are frequent and in the General Orders of the Revolution and many of his letters to friends there is nothing left to be desired on this point.

And the last Rule—"Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called Conscience"—was one that few men have succeeded in following better than George Washington.

Despite the effort and time spent in tracing the sources of these Rules,⁹ no one seems to have connected an interesting item in Benjamin Franklin's Account Books¹⁰ with them. In the account with his brother James Franklin, Benjamin Franklin notes the printing of "60 Civilities Rules," 1730, October thirtieth. So it is not at all impossible that the book from which George Washington copied his Rules of Civility, ten years or so later, may have come from the press of Benjamin Franklin.

Washington's study of geometry was confined to the geometry of construction. He was introduced to the demonstrated conclusions of Euclid as arbitrary rules and used the theorems as facts on which to build his constructions. With the axioms as taught to-day he seemed unacquainted and his record of the Pythagorean theorem will make plain the method of instruction through which Washington struggled to a clear understanding of the eternal verities of mathematics.

Having two of ye sides of a right Angle plain Triangle given to find ye third side. This most excellent & useful Proposition is generally called Pythagoras's Theorem & in ye forty seventh Proposition of Euclid's Elements of Geometry it is demonstrated and Proven that ye square made on ye Hypothenuse or slant side of a right Angled plain triangle is equal to ye sum of ye squares made of ye Base & Perpendicular.

It is consoling fellowship to realize that George Washington's golden school-days, like those of most American boys, were clouded by the grim shadow of old Pythagoras and his geometrical nightmare, though Washington was fortunate in being able to accept the fact without having to digest the demonstration. It should not be hastily concluded that Washington's mathematical training was an easy one. The mentality demanded of him at the age of thirteen or fourteen may be judged from the defini-

tion of a decimal fraction which he had to assimilate: "A Decimal Fraction," he wrote, "is an artifiical way of setting and expressing of Natural and Vulgar Fractions as whole numbers and whereas the Denominations of Vulgar Fractions are Divers the Denominators of Decimal Fractions are always certain for a Decimal Fraction hath always for its Denominator an Unit with a Cypher or Cyphers annex'd to it and must therefore be either 10, 100, 1000, 10,000 &c. and Therefore in Writing down ye Denominator by bear Inspection it is certainly known consisting of an Unit with as many Cyphers annex'd to it as there are Places or Figures in ye Numerator." It is impossible to withhold admiration, and pity, for the youthful intelligence forced to struggle through such a clumsy definition into clear mathematical understanding.

Solid measure, gauging, dry measure and mensuration of superficies were reviewed, or taught again, after the decimal fractions, and in the lesson "To gauge anything that hath the shape of a wooden hand bowl" is proof of Washington's intense juvenile absorption in his task, for the first time the word "bowl" occurs he transcribes it, with meticulous penmanship, as "anything that hath the Shape of a Wooden hand Bowel."

The claim that Mather's *Young Man's Companion* was the text-book studied by Washington rests on the dubious foundation of Washington's name written on the title-page of an existing copy. This is claimed to be a genuine signature, but proof has not been produced. It is just as reasonable to give credit to Fisher's *Accountant* (which is a steal from Crocker's *Arithmetic*) or perhaps the Crocker itself was known to George Washington. Two of Washington's school exercises, the gauge of the wooden "bowl" and a recipe for keeping ink from freezing, are common to Crocker, Fisher and Mather. Benjamin Franklin revised and reprinted Crocker under the title of *The Young Man's Companion* and a copy of his ninth edition (1748) has survived. This also contains the problem of the wooden hand bowl and the recipe for non-freezing ink. Some of Franklin's earlier editions could have found their way from Philadelphia to Virginia, just as his publication of the *Rules of Civility* in 1730 could have so traveled. This is no greater strain of surmise than the statements made as to the Mather publication, and it is certainly a delightful thought that George Washington could have studied from text-books printed by Benjamin Franklin.

Washington's surveying problems follow the trigonometry exercises and among them are such far from simple puzzles as: "How to take an Inaccessible distance at two Stations," "How to measure a field in which bog or marsh interferes with chaining" and "How to measure any piece of Ground be it never so Irregular and to Cast up the Content thereof in Acres, Roodes and Perches and likewise to Examine ye truth of ye Survey." It is rather beyond a boy of fifteen of to-day to measure a field, be it ever so irregular; certainly it is to be doubted if he could examine the truth of the survey, even if made by a professional surveyor. From the exercises it is plain that Washington had a natural liking for surveying; the examples are too many, too varied and too carefully inscribed to have been done entirely as tasks; some of them indeed, seem to be self-assigned problems.

Other than mathematics, the exercises show the scope of Washington's school training to have included a study of the calendar, in which he records the unusual information (unusual in present-day pedagogy at least) of the "Dominical Letter, Golden Number, Cycle of the Sun, Roman Indiction, Epact" and other things in which we have long since ceased to be interested and which now are rarely to be found, even in old-fashioned almanacs. But Washington carefully copied down that the "Golden Number or Prime" was "a Circular Revolution of 19 years in which term of years it hath been anciently supposed that the Sun and Moon do make all the Variety of Aspects one to another. The Cycle of the Sun maketh its Revolution in 28 years because in that time all the Variety of ye Dominical Letters & Leap Years are Expired & the 29th Year the Cycle doth begin again which Number is to find out the Dominical Letter for any year Past Present or to come. The Roman Indiction consisteth of 15 years & is set down in the Charters & Writings of the Prothonotaries of the Pope of Rome for once in 15 years the Nations were to pay tribute to the Romans. The Epact is a Number never exceeding 30 Days it is the 11 Days and 6 Hours which added to the Lunar Year being 354 Days do make it equal to the Solar Year which is 365 Days."

Geography was included in Washington's study, and for this as for surveying the boy displayed a liking and aptitude which, later, developed into a practical study and appreciation of maps that stood him in good stead through the maneuvers of the Revolutionary War and his presiden-

tial administrations. Some of the geographical definitions of his school-days are delightful. A continent is defined as "a great Quantity of Land not Divided nor Separated by the Sea wherein are many Kingdoms & Principalities; as Europe, Asia & Africa is one Continent & America is Another." A peninsula "is such a Part of Land as is almost Surrounded with Water & is only Joined with the Land by an Isthmus such as Morea in ye Levant & Periviana in America." (Morea was the Greek peninsula; Periviana, or Peruviana was an ancient name for South America.)

A promatory is some high Mountain or great Cape of Land that shooteth itself into ye Sea as Cape Bon esperence & Cape de Norde in Africa.

The Ocean is a general Collection of ye Waters wch environeth the Earth on every side.

Washington was taught that "A Climate is a Certain space of Earth & Sea that is included within ye Space of two Parrellels & of them there have been Anciently Accounted Seven." (It is consoling to see that young George Washington had trouble with the spelling of parallel.) These "Climates" he recorded as "1. Dia Moreos. 2. Dia Syenes. 3. Dia Alexandria. 4. Dia Rhodes. 5. Dia Romes. 6. Dia Boresthones. 7. Dia Ripheos. But now there are 42 on each side of the Equator ending where ye longest day is 24 Hours." The precise areas of these "Climates" are not now easy to determine, but they may be guessed at by the curious: Moreos probably meant the climate of the Greek peninsula; Syenes may have been intended for Syria; Alexandria for that of Egypt; Rhodes the Mediterranean climate south of Anatolia, etc., etc.

The earth, Washington was taught, "is Divided into five Zones viz One Torrid or Burning Zone, two Temperate & two Frozen Zones. The Torrid Zone is that which is one each side of ye Equinoctial bounded by ye Tropicks of Cancer & Capricorn. The Two Temperate zones are contained between each Tropick & ye Polar Circles." The political divisions of the earth are even more interesting; they do, in fact, furnish us with the best comprehensive picture of Washington's youthful knowledge. He was taught that "The Globe of the Earth is Divided into four Parts viz: Europe . . . Asia . . . Africa . . . America. Europe is bounded from Asia by ye Mediterranean Sea, on the East with ye River Janais & on ye

West with ye Western Ocean & Containeth these Provinces: Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Sweedland, Muscovy (later called Russia), Poland, Hungary and Sclavoni¹¹ and Greece. The Principal Islands are: Great Britain, Cande (meaning Candia, or Crete), Sardinia, Ireland, Sicily, Corsica and Cyprus.”

Asia is bounded on the North with ye Northern Ocean & on ye South with the Red Sea; On ye East with ye East Indian Ocean and on ye West with ye Flood Janais.¹²

The principal regions of Asia were given as “Anatolia, Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Arabia, Georgia, Asyria, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Persia, Mogul, Tartaria, China, India and the Islands thereof.”¹³

Africa is Bounded on ye East with ye Red Sea, on the West with ye Atlantick Ocean [called by Washington, “ye Western Ocean” in bounding Europe]; on the South with ye Southern Ocean, on ye North with ye Mediterranean Sea. The Provinces are: Egypt, Barbary, Ethiopia, Abyssines, Monomotapa and Nubia. Principal Islands: Madagasca, St. Thomas, Madar Isles [meaning the Madeiras] and Cape Verde Islands.¹⁴

America is Bounded on ye East with ye Atlantick Ocean on the West with ye Pacific South Sea and on the North without Bounds and on ye South with the Magellanick Sea. It consists of two *viz.* North & South America. The Provinces of North America are: New France (meaning Canada), New England, New York, Pensylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Carolina, North & South, Terra Florida and Mexico or New Spain. The Chief Islands are Iceland, Greenland, Coloformia,¹⁵ Hispaniola, Cuba, Porto Rico, Jamaica, Barbadoes & ye rest of ye Caribee Iselands.

The Provinces of South America are: Brazil, Chile, Amazones, Terra Firma [meaning Venezuela], Peru, Paragua, Magellanick land [meaning eastern Argentine] and one island Terro del Fuego.

After rounding out the earth in this fashion, George Washington was introduced to astronomy. It was hardly more than an introduction, quite brief and elemental, but of course we can not know how thoroughly he was exercised in the matter apart from these written exercises. He copied

out the "Names and Number of the Stars of each Constellation on the Celestial Globe," which he divides into the northern and southern constellations. The northern were twenty-three in number and the stars composing each were named; the southern were listed as twenty-seven. The zodiacal grouping is also written down.

The last surviving page of the school exercises has Washington's definition of the artificial globe and the proper manner of using it to determine the latitude and longitude of a given place and very few boys of fifteen to-day possess this practical knowledge.

As outlined by these exercises George Washington's school training was quite thoroughly utilitarian. Only a small part of it did not have a real value and bearing upon the activities of his later life. The foundations were good and somewhere was imparted the stimulation to continue the search for knowledge, through independent reading, after his school-days ended. Two notes of this are among the miscellaneous memoranda of his earliest diary: "I read to the Reign of K:John" and "In the Spectator Read to No. 143." This was certainly not wasted time. Addison's *Spectator* was read for years in the public schools of the United States and is still included as collateral reading in some high schools as a part of the training in English, and a knowledge of the history of England would certainly not come amiss to any colonial American.

In another respect the work of Joseph Addison exercised a most profound influence upon Washington. *The Tragedy of Cato* was well-known and popular in the middle and southern colonies. Benjamin Franklin printed four dozen of them for William Parks, of Williamsburg, Virginia, in August, 1743,¹⁶ and Washington became acquainted with its high republican principles at the impressionable and romantic period of his life. It is inextricably mixed with his love of the theater and some of the lines left a lasting impress upon him. The political philosophy found in the dialogue is closely akin to Washington's and is encountered so many times in his letters that this conclusion is fairly warranted.

The moot question of Washington's having been taught Latin will ever remain a moot question. Charles Henry Wharton, who wrote in 1779 (published in London in 1780), what is probably the earliest American sketch of Washington's life, speaks slightly of Washington's training, but as Wharton was a Latin scholar who conversed in that tongue, his

statement may be accepted reservedly. At any rate the Latin inscription in Samuel Patrick's *Clavis Homerica* (edition of 1742) which has so often been advanced as proof, is not in the writing of George Washington as claimed, but in that of George Augustine Washington, as is also the presentation line to Bushrod Washington. Also the fact that the text of *Clavis Homerica* is in Greek is decidedly upsetting as a Latin argument. The occasional use of Latin words and short phrases in Washington's letters is hardly more than a result of observation by a man who believed in the value of culture, many of whose friends possessed a classical education and sprinkled their conversation and correspondence with this erudition, as was the custom of colonial times.

Only a little of the ethical training of Washington is noticeable in these school exercises. He gives a glimpse of his own recollection in his reply to an address from the mayor and commonalty of Fredericksburg (February 14, 1784), in which he spoke of that town as: "The place of my growing infancy and the honorable mention which is made of my revered Mother; by whose maternal hand (early deprived of a Father) I was led from Childhood."¹⁷ But some credit also is due to Augustine and perhaps Lawrence Washington. That Lawrence was responsible for the romantic side of George Washington's development is a reasonable guess. The halo of the hero surrounded him when he departed on the military expedition of Admiral Vernon against the Spanish Main, and Lawrence may also be responsible for his young half-brother's love of the theater, for the first record we have of Washington attending a play is in Barbadoes. If the military and sportsman's side of George Washington was inspired by Lawrence it may be that the religious side is also to be attributed to his influence, for there are indications that, after Lawrence's health gave way, he developed a religious interest and George's idealism of his elder half-brother could have carried him easily along this path in such company.

Some of the curious agreements between the school-boy *Rules of Civility* and Washington's after-conduct have been touched upon, but still closer agreements may be noted with the poem on *True Happiness*, which is copied out in Washington's school exercise book. The coincidences here, for of course they can be nothing more than coincidences, are nevertheless very surprising.

TRUE HAPPINESS

These are the things which once Possess'd
 Will make a life thats truly bless'd
 A Good Estate on healthy Soil
 Not got by Vice, nor yet by Toil:
 Round a warm Fire, a Pleasant Joke,
 With Chimney ever free from Smoke:
 A Strength entire, A Sparkling Bowl,
 A quiet Wife a quiet Soul,
 A Mind as well as body, whole
 Prudent Simplicity, constant Friends,
 A diet which no art Commends;
 A Merry Night without much Drinking
 A Happy Thought without much Thinking;
 Each Night by Quiet Sleep made Short
 A Will to be but what thou art:
 Possess'd of these, all else defy
 And neither wish nor fear to Die.

A Good Estate on healthy Soil
 Not got by Vice, nor yet by Toil.

is quite a fair description of Mount Vernon and its acquirement. The warm fire and a chimney ever free from smoke is a commentary of value on an ever-present nuisance with our ancestors.

A Strength entire, a Sparkling Bowl

was not far from the truth also for, despite several severe illnesses, Washington remained, to the end of his life, remarkably strong and robust; and he did enjoy a sparkling bowl.

A quiet Wife a quiet Soul

were truly his possessions.

A Mind as well as body, whole
 Prudent Simplicity, constant Friends
 A Diet which no art Commends

All these were his. Ostentation was foreign to his character; his real friends were whole-souled in their loyalty, and the simplicity of his diet is well-known.

A Merry Night without much Drinking
A Happy Thought without much Thinking

These were not strangers to Washington. His drinking was never of the roistering or sottish kind and his own humor and appreciation of that of others was plain, simple and uninvolved.

A Will to be but what thou art

Consciously, or unconsciously, this was an inbred principle with George Washington; duplicity was abhorrent to him.

Possess'd of these, all else defy
And neither wish nor fear to Die.

And both his life and his death proved positively that he neither wished the one nor feared the other.

It can not be assumed, of course, that Washington remembered this rhyme or consciously modeled his actions upon its precepts. Agreement is coincidental; yet these couplets and many of the *Rules of Civility* are reflected so clearly in his later life that there is justification for the thought that Washington's youthful training made most lasting impressions upon him. *True Happiness* is an accurate picture of his life at Mount Vernon, just as the last *Rule of Civility* is an accurate sketch portrait of the man himself. It is the last of the school exercises and forms a fitting end to his school-days. The real story of George Washington's life starts from that point, and it is the story of a man who kept that little spark of conscience alive and glowing throughout a life of staggering responsibilities.

CHAPTER II

BOYHOOD—THE SHENANDOAH ADVENTURE

AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON moved his family rather oftener than did most Virginians, and when George was two or three years old the family went from Bridges Creek to the property on Little Hunting Creek in old Prince William County.¹ Here they stayed about four years when an accidental fire caused Augustine, with his wife, six sons² and two daughters, to move to the farm he had purchased in Brunswick Parish, King George County, almost opposite Fredericksburg. The youngest daughter died soon afterward, and George Washington was nine years old when the military enthusiasm, which is so much a part of most normal boys' make-up, was first awakened. His half-brother, Lawrence, with a major's commission, went off to war with the Virginia troops that were to cooperate with the British regulars in an expedition against the Spanish town of Cartagena, in South America. The uniforms, the bright sword, the bustle of preparation, the discussions and arrangements were bound to have created a deep impression and were the first stimulation of a real ambition which, for nearly a decade, was the all absorbing one of George Washington's life. When Major Lawrence Washington returned, a year later, with brave tales of camp and siege on the jungle coast of the Spanish Main; of fighting by ship and shore against the embattled Don, George's ambition was fired anew.

But there was a curious reflex in all this. The failure of the siege was due to the feud that arose between Admiral Vernon³ and General Wentworth. The army blamed the navy and the navy responded in kind. The campaign collapsed and tropical disease ended the fiasco. The colonial troops from North America had been handled with brutal indifference by the British officers and the Cartagena campaign was a black memory in all the colonies that had furnished troops. This bitterness came back to Virginia and the fact that Major Washington sided with Admiral Vernon probably created a natural reaction in young George against the

British Red-coats who had ill-treated his splendid half-brother. Youth reacts more intensely against injustice than does age, and this Cartagena affair may well have prepared a mental soil in George Washington where the glamour dissolving experiences of the Braddock and Forbes campaigns could take root and flower later into antagonism of all British official power.

Whether George and his three younger brothers, John Augustine, Samuel and Charles, and their sister Elizabeth (Betty) shared in a local educational training, or whether this little group formed a school in themselves at Mount Vernon is unknown. English customs were largely followed in Virginia and the practise of concentrating attention and effort upon the eldest son was not unusual. It is true, Lawrence was, at this time, preparing for his marriage with Ann Fairfax, but he could not have spent all his time at Belvoir and George could have been copying out his school exercises at Mount Vernon under his tutelage.

Four months after Augustine died, Lawrence married Ann Fairfax. The scant surviving records only hint at George's going from the Rappahannock farm to the Potomac, as they do also that the years 1743-47 were spent by him in part in Chotank and Westmoreland, as well as King George and Mount Vernon. Somewhere in those years were the many happy days in the Chotank region with his cousins the Townsend Washingtons, days so well remembered throughout his busy life that they were mentioned in the most important and revealing document drawn by a man, his will:

To the acquaintances and friends of my Juvenile years Lawrence Washington and Robert Washington of Chotanck I give my other two gold headed Canes, having my Arms engraved on them; and to each (as they will be useful where they live) I leave one of the Spy-glasses which constituted part of my Equipage during the late War.

It may be that it was in those Chotank days that Washington learned to ride, to handle a canoe and to swim. Of his skill in the first two accomplishments there is documentary evidence and to spare; but the last is more of a logical deduction buttressed to some extent by the record in the Spotsylvania County Order Book, December 5, 1751, of the arrest of

two young women for robbing George Washington's clothes while he was "washing" in the river in the summer of that year. Unless the Rappahannock was very different in 1751 from what it is to-day, it was not a stream in which any one would choose to "wash." Its muddy current would make such work exceedingly difficult, so that it is much more likely that the young George was swimming rather than "washing." It is quite likely the foundation of his wide knowledge of trees was laid in these Chotank days, while roaming the woods with the friends and acquaintances of his juvenile years. The number and variety of timber with which Washington was acquainted is surprising and the number and variety of the species of trees noted as boundary markers for his survey lines are many. He notes oaks, red, white, black, Spanish and hickory-oak; chestnut and chestnut-oak; black-gum and sweet-gum; dogwood, mulberry and sassafras, maple and sugar maple, walnut and white walnut, pine, poplar, cherry, mountain birch, elm, ash, ironwood, whitewood, sycamore and locust, without mentioning the many unusual trees he was continually searching for and planting at Mount Vernon in his later years.

George Washington's school-days ended at the age of fourteen or fifteen. In January, July and September, 1747, he was visiting the Chotank Washingtons and carefully entering his business transactions, as became a rising young man of affairs, in his first journal of business accounts. He received small sums from his mother at intervals and there are entries of various shillings and pence from Robert and Bailey Washington. He purchased books from the latter, among which was a translation of *A Panegyrick to the Memory of Frederick, late Duke of Schomberg*, who was then considered the greatest master of the art of war in Europe. What influence this work exerted can not be gauged, but that a boy of fourteen would spend two shillings sixpence of his scant funds for such a book and not read it is hardly possible. Having read, some of it doubtless stuck in his memory and its flamboyant method of presentation may be partly responsible for Washington's youthful literary style.

The business of surveying had a strong appeal for young Washington and it was most natural that he should have considered this as a means of livelihood for in September, 1747, he purchased from Bailey Washington a two-foot Gunther rule, a purchase almost as symbolic of his sur-

veying ambition as the purchase of the volume on the Duke of Schomberg was of his military enthusiasm.

Beyond these few bits of general information as to Washington's interests, activities and movements there is but one other fact to be recorded and that is the so-called midshipman episode. Joseph Ball's letter from England, to his sister Mary, is the sole surviving evidence and this is by no means sufficient to establish the romantic details which have clustered around the anecdote. It does prove, of course, the existence of an idea of George Washington's entering upon a seafaring career.⁴ The ultimate decision was a negative, but the how and why of this are unknown, despite the sentimental pictures that have been painted of the affair, both in pigment and literature.

Early in the year 1748 young Washington's occasional stays at Mount Vernon seem to have settled into a permanent arrangement to live with his brother Lawrence. He surveyed the Major's "turnip" field, mapped Dogue and Little Hunting Creeks and lost several shillings at whist with his sister-in-law, Ann Fairfax Washington. His intimacy with the Fairfax family is to be dated around this time and there can be little doubt that there was much visiting between Mount Vernon and Belvoir and sprightly Ann may well have been the sponsor of her young brother-in-law to her family.⁵ One important result of this intimacy was the arrangement for George Washington and George William Fairfax to accompany the surveying expedition which Lord Fairfax was planning into the Shenandoah, to survey, bound and plat a portion of the Fairfax domain for tenantry. Exactly how it happened that Washington became one of the little group that went across the mountains is not clear. It was probably a very casual arrangement that came about through George Washington's evident interest in all surveying matters and the friendship that existed between himself and George William Fairfax, though the latter was eight years his senior. Washington must have been a rather tall, raw-boned and strong youth at sixteen years and he, as any boy, would have welcomed the chance to go on such an adventure, for adventure it surely was. It is doubtful if either Lord Fairfax or Lawrence Washington would have permitted their young relatives to go into the wild frontier country unless an older and responsible man were with them. This man was James Genn,⁶ the county surveyor of Prince William County. It was wise to

have George William Fairfax acquainted with the Fairfax domain as he would have a part in the management of it in due course. As Lord Fairfax's representative on this expedition, Genn could appeal to him in case of need. Fairfax and young Washington were excellent friends thus early, of which there is no better evidence needed than the various small sums borrowed by Fairfax from Washington which are duly entered in George's first business account book (previously mentioned). George Washington received no pay for his services on this survey expedition, at least if he did, he failed to enter it in this account book, where he entered all other receipts and expeditures of the period, many of which are by no means as important as this payment would have been. Most likely there was no thought of pay on either side. It was simply a good chance for a hardening, practical experience for both young men, under the tutelage and eye of a mature man and professional surveyor.

Spring came early in Virginia and about the middle of March George William Fairfax and George Washington rode out from Belvoir into the foot-hills of the Blue Ridge where they were joined by Genn. They crossed the mountains through Ashby's Gap and rode down into the fertile valley of the Shenandoah. This being the first real event in George Washington's life, he kept a diary record and many exciting possibilities of the trip were quite measurably fulfilled.

The little cavalcade traveled nearly a score of miles down the valley before beginning their serious work of running base-lines and laying off areas. Their first host was Isaac Pennington, of the comforts of whose frontier cabin, Washington writes with naïve frankness. "We got our Supper and was lighted into a Room and I not being so good a Woodsman as ye rest of my Company striped myself very orderly and went in to ye Bed as they called it when to my Surprise I found it to be nothing but a little Straw Matted together without Sheets or anything else but only one thread Bear blanket with double its Weight of Vermin such as Lice Fleas &c I was glad to get up (as soon as ye Light was carried from us) I put on my Cloths and Lay as my Companions."

Had he not been very tired he could not have slept much that night and he promised himself that he would sleep before the fire in the open thereafter; which he did, only to have the tent carried away by a gale one night and to have it nearly burned up, by catching fire, on another.

The next day they traveled up to Frederick (as Winchester was then called) "where our Baggage came to us. we cleaned ourselves (to get Rid of ye Game we had catched ye Night before) and took a Review of ye Town and thence returned to our Lodgings where we had a good Dinner prepar'd for us Wine and Rum Punch in Plenty and a good Feather Bed with clean Sheets which was a very agreeable regale."

The importance attached by Washington to the clean sheets and comfortable bed is such that it is evident he had never before encountered the hardships and "ye Game" which he mentions; but his mention of it is with a chuckle that speaks well for his sense of humor. The possession of this humor has been persistently denied, but he had a full share which did not desert him at any time during his life.

High water in the Potomac kept them from crossing and while they waited for the flood to subside, Washington and George William Fairfax visited the Berkeley Springs, which even then had acquired a fame that had reached as far as Philadelphia. They finally crossed the river in canoes, swimming their horses, and traveled to Cresap's over what Washington described, with the absolute judgment of youth, as the worst road that was ever trod by man or beast. Cresap was one of the famous frontier figures of the day and his place was on a main traveled warrior's path so that, at Washington describes it, "we were agreeably surpris'd at y.sight of thirty odd Indians coming from War with only one Scalp. We had some Liquor with us of which we gave them part it elevating their Spirits put them in y. Humour of Dauncing of whom we had a War Daunce there manner of Dauncing is as follows Viz They clear a Large Circle and make a Great Fire in y. middle then seats themselves around it y.Speaker makes a grand speech telling them in what Manner they are to Daunce after he has finished y. best Dauncer jumps as one awaked out of a Sleep and Runs and Jumps about y. Ring in a most comical Manner he is followed by y rest then begins there Musicians to Play ye. Musick in a Pot half of Water with a Deerskin Stretched over it as tight as it can and a goard with some Shott in it to Rattle and a Piece of an horses Tail tied to it to make it look fine y.one keeps Rattling and y. other Drumming all y. while y. others is Dauncing."

This, for observation and description at sixteen years of age, is most creditable and though George Washington may have seen many war-

dances later, it is doubtful if any of them impressed him as much as did this first one.

But the excursion was not all a holiday, enlivened by amusements like the Indian war-dance. Both young men, Surveyor Genn and the chain and rod-men, who were hired local inhabitants, worked hard and the record shows that they laid off some hundreds of acres on the South Branch of the Potomac, the Cacapehon and in the Shenandoah Valley. Their provisions ran low and George William Fairfax rode off to arrange for a better supply. While he was gone George Washington notes that the surveyors were attended by "a great Company of People, Men, Women and Children . . . showing their Antick tricks. I really think they seemed to be as Ignorant a Set of People as the Indians." These were probably German settlers that had come up the Shenandoah from Pennsylvania and their "Anticks" may well have been expressions of surprise and dismay at the surveyors' actions. They had settled on the land, some of them years before, and were disturbed by these strange men who were marking off their possessions. Not understanding English they were endeavoring to find out what it meant, for they knew enough of such work to be fearful that their ownership might later be questioned.

When George William Fairfax returned, he and Washington gathered the surveying party together and rode around an "impassable contour of mountain and river, called the Trough, on the South Branch" and camped in the woods near a "wild meadow," which is an early record of those strange areas of cleared land which even now are encountered in the unsettled forest regions and are called Indian meadows. Not quite one month after the two young men set out from Belvoir they left Genn and his surveyors on the South Branch and started on their long ride home across the mountains. They traveled by way of the Great Cacapehon and Frederick Town and from there laid their course for Williams's Gap (later Snickers and now Bluemont), but lost their way and got as high up as Ashby's before they recognized their surroundings and turned down the valley again. It meant twenty extra miles, but they succeeded in getting through Williams's Gap and eighteen miles beyond to William West's, in Fairfax County, that same night. "This day see a Rattled Snake ye first we had seen in all our Journey." The rocky section of the Blue Ridge, between Ashby's and Williams's, is still fairly well populated by

this dangerous reptile and from this comment by Washington it would seem that the region was not free from them in colonial times.

“Wednesday ye 13th of April 1748 Mr. Fairfax got safe home and I myself safe to my Brothers’ which concludes my Journal” and, though he was unaware of it, he could have added with perfect truth that it concluded his boyhood.

CHAPTER III

ROMANTIC YOUTH

THAT George Washington had put away childish things, after his return from the journey over the mountains, is quite evident from his account book. His friends and relatives borrowed various sums from him, George William Fairfax, John Lewis, Major Lawrence Washington and others asked for a few shillings; he won small amounts at billiards and won and lost at cards; the payment of a bill for Ann Fairfax Washington and meeting the needs of his half-brother, Major Lawrence, when the two were on a visit to the Great Falls of the Potomac in furtherance of the Potomac Company's business, are duly set down. There is an intriguing entry, apparently at Fredericksburg, of cash paid a "Musick Master for my entrance" but with no clue as to the meaning. That Washington was known to his companions and friends as a thrifty youth who could be depended upon to be "in funds" when most of them were not, is plain and it is also plain, from the cash entries in the account book, that with this thriftiness went a recognized, open-handed generosity that could be relied upon to respond on call.¹

George Washington enjoyed his short youth to the full, and these cash accounts furnish the outline of his care-free journeys through the Rappahannock and James tide-water region; of excursions with the Lewis boys and paying his share of club repasts at Yorktown, at Williamsburg, at Port Royal and other places of good cheer and hospitality; of peach brandy and bottles of "Rhennish," of bowls of arrack and modest sums won and lost at whist, at loo and other card games; of attending shooting matches, barbecues and races. But this joyous youth was all too short. On July 20, 1749, George Washington was certified as the official surveyor for Culpeper County and the expense entries change to such sober, bread-winning items as "To surveying 400 acres of land Culpr. County 2.3.0" and "To copying 4 Deeds out of the Proprietiers 12/."

The youthful days of careless visiting, of silk stockings, pumps, and

dancing were at an end. The fastidious young man, to whom a feather-bed and clean sheets were "a very agreeable regale," had now to encounter again the frontier hardships of his surveying holiday with George William Fairfax and this time he encountered them alone. He is glimpsed in the draft of a letter to his friend Richard, in half-humorous protest against his distasteful experiences. He was working, he wrote,

amongst a parcel of Barbarians and an uncouth set of People . . . since . . . October last I have not sleep'd above three Nights or four in a bed but after walking a good deal all the Day lay down before the fire upon a Little Hay Straw Fodder or bairskin whichever is to be had with Man Wife and Children like a Parcel of Dogs or Catts and happy's he that get the Birth nearest the fire theres nothing that would make it pass tolerably but a good Reward a Doubloon is my constant gain every Day that the Weather will permit my going out and sometimes Six Pistoles. . . . I have never had my Cloths off but lay and sleep in them like a Negro except the few Nights I have lay'n in Frederick Town."

This survey work took him not only through Culpeper, but into Frederick and Augusta Counties, where he traveled from the Potomac to the Cacapehon and Lost River. During this lonely work, lonely because while he picked up rod and chain-men from the native settlers, there were none among the "parcel of Barbarians" and uncouth people who could satisfy his need of companionship. He whiled away the evenings, or rainy days when he could not work, by writing letters to real or imaginary friends (the close similarity of the letters to John, Robin and Richard which are copied out in the memorandum part of his early note-book, strongly support the theory that these letters were mere exercises and time-passers) which, nevertheless, show his mind as dwelling, in unconscious protest of the present, upon the pleasant hours of the past.

There is little in these practise letters different or unexpected from those of any young man of seventeen, or eighteen, who had tasted some of the pleasure of the agreeable social life of colonial Virginia. Affairs of the heart, then as now, were the interesting topic among youthful friends and the tendency of youth to exaggerate personal romance was not lacking. Washington names names with the obviousness of the youthful need

to definitely personify his ideas and paints satisfying romantic pictures around "Col. George Fairfax's Wife Sister," a "Lowland Beauty" and a former adored unknown, in which appears the self-portrait of the heroic, disconsolate lover, a figure dear to the heart of every adolescent male at one time or another in his emotional youth. All of the usual effects are present in George's melancholy (a melancholy which was only loneliness, though he was entirely unaware of it): "Adding Fuel to fire" the "troublesome Passion" and "the grave of oblivion," "eternal forgetfulness," none the less real for its unusual spelling. But youth, as always, asserts itself and the romantic melancholy was not so overwhelming as to prevent a bit of teasing from creeping into his letter to "Dear Sally" by hoping that "tho' I am out of Sight you'l not lett me be out of Mind" and, in the next sentence, explaining how his dejection is lightened by "the very agreeable Young Lady" who lives in the same house with him.⁸

A letter of this period which Washington wrote to his well-liked sister-in-law, Ann Fairfax Washington, on the occasion of Lawrence's arrival in England, is exactly in keeping with the exalted images of youth. "I hope," George solemnly wrote, "you'll make Use of your Natural Resolution and contendness as they are the only remedies to spend the time of with ease and pleasure to yourself." This sage advice, from adolescent eighteen to a married woman several years his senior, whose husband was absent on a long business trip, is delightfully naïve and, whether the letter was actually sent or not, it is revealing evidence of the romantic strain which will not be unfamiliar to many men who can honestly recall their youth.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRAGEDY OF CATO—BARBADOES

THE *Tragedy of Cato*, by Joseph Addison, now neglected and half forgotten, exercised both a cultural and political influence upon the American colonists and, though the extent of that influence can not now be gauged, there is no doubt of the decided effect this tragedy had upon George Washington. Throughout Washington's entire life the heroics of various lines in *Cato* appear in his letters and where such lines stuck in his memory it is safe to say that the philosophy of them lingered. There is no question of Washington's liking for the theater. It was deep and abiding and he appears to have obtained more pleasure from theatrical performance than any other form of amusement possible in his time. The popularity of *Cato* in the colonies is attested by its being a favorite in amateur theatricals, which was one of the social diversions, in Virginia at least.

When George Washington, in 1749-50 attempted his only known flights of poetic composition, one of them

From your bright sparkling Eyes I was undone . . .

is roughly modeled upon the *Verses to the Author of Cato* that precede the 1713 edition; and the other, the well-known acrostic to Frances Alexander:

Ah! woe's me, that I should Love and conceal
Long have I wish'd but never dare reveal

is suspiciously like Juba's cry in Act I, Scene 4:

Why wilt thou urge me to confess a Flame
I long have stifled and wou'd fain conceal?

There will be more of *Cato*, but just now a word as to the acrostic. The

oftener it is scanned the plainer becomes the fact that before George had succeeded in crocheting Miss Alexander's first name he had become more interested in working out the acrostic than he was in the lady who had inspired the attempt. Why the rhyme was abandoned can not be stated, but it is a fair guess that it was not given up from overwhelming emotion.

George struggled on for eight lines, after having conquered the name Frances, and the inspiration of the poet is evidently and most completely lost in a herculean effort to capture enough sentimental thoughts to round out a triumphant finish. These two awkward attempts at versification are the first evidences we have of the strain of play-acting in George Washington and this strain may, in a measure, explain his rather flowery extravagance of literary expression.

The basis of it is the everlasting romance of youth, which is not confined to any particular period of time, or type of man. It is as prevalent to-day as it was in colonial times; but its display in high-flown rhetoric is now more rigidly suppressed for fear of ridicule. In Washington's day it was a natural form of written expression, the minuet of letter-writing.

In a different strain, but still that of "flaming youth," are the two random entries of this same period, the first of which is only another of the evidences of the rhyme fascination among the English-speaking race:

T'was Perfect Love before }
But Now I do adore } Sd Young M:A: his

The next entry, though not rhyme, brings us close to young Washington in the prevalent youthful practise of using a cipher for secrecy: "Whats the Noblest Passion of the Mind at" and then he makes two weird symbols which, it may be doubted, he himself could have deciphered a year later. George Washington at seventeen years of age was certainly like most other boys.

It is easy to understand George Washington. It is easy to understand any thoroughly sincere, honest, simple soul; but it is difficult to analyze him. The influence of his mother, of whose early life and years of widowhood we know very little (the difficult, personal characteristics were developed, seemingly, in later years), can not be appraised; the influence of his father, whose worth and character are fairly indicated; that of his

elder half-brother, Lawrence, whose influence was on the military and religious sides and, lastly, that of Lawrence's wife, the sprightly Ann Fairfax, through whom George came in contact with that family and the courtly manners and principles representative of the best English breeding; these are the factors which hold the answer to the problem. The Fairfax influence was one of importance in the character building of George Washington. For a score of years he gradually, though subconsciously, absorbed it and it built into his fiber many elements of strength for the years of tremendous trial and temptation that followed. It strengthened him to stand even against the Fairfax political ideas, for that family clung to the British theories, though it was not able to reject the American view-point completely. George Washington split with the British theories, yet he never relinquished a jot of his high regard for the Fairfax family and this friendship and trust remained unshadowed to the end.

The careless round of boyish visiting in Westmoreland, Williamsburg, Chotank and Prince George came to an end when George settled down to live with Lawrence at Mount Vernon. He became his half-brother's close companion; visited the Berkeley Springs with him in Lawrence's vain seeking for health and, finally, the two embarked for Barbadoes, whither Lawrence had been advised to go in an effort to check the tubercular weakness he had developed. In September, 1751, the two sailed from Potomac for the West Indies, which was the only time George Washington ever traveled beyond the confines of his native land. The diary which he kept of this voyage contains many entries which show the development of that stilted flowery mode of expression, characteristic of the time. With the sweeping superlatives of youth the sea is referred to as "a fickle and Merciless ocean" and a sunset was "a prodigy . . . remarkable for its extraordinary redness." After being in Barbadoes for about two weeks, George was "strongly attacked by the small Pox" and confined to the house for a month. The extent to which his face was scarred by this disease is not known but it was so slight as to have escaped comment by most of those who, later, described his appearance. By the time he was up and around again Lawrence had begun to suspect that Barbadoes was of no benefit to him and it was planned that George should return to Virginia and bring Ann Fairfax Washington out to Bermuda, whither Lawrence intended to go. George accordingly sailed back for the Virginia capes.

Considering the short time he spent in Barbadoes and the handicap of a confining illness, the amount of information he acquired respecting the island was most unusual. He entered it all in his diary, the physical features of the island, its fruit, produce, live stock and agricultural practises and a few items of its military strength and defenses. As a picture of the kind of things which interested George Washington at nineteen years of age the record is decidedly interesting reading. Agriculture and the military predominate but there is a note of his attendance at a theatrical performance, which is the first of which we have record; the second comes two months after he returns from Barbadoes, when he lends his brother Sam, one shilling, three pence, at the play-house, presumably in Williamsburg. The first hours of the voyage after leaving the island were employed in writing down the information noted above, and perhaps it was well that he did so as the very next day they "Met with a brisk Trade Wind and pretty large Swell wch made the Ship rowl much and me very sick."

The *Industry*, in which he had sailed from Bridgetown, Barbadoes, reached the Virginia capes toward the end of January, 1752. Washington landed in York River and hastened to Williamsburg to deliver Adjutant Lawrence Washington's letter to Lieutenant-Governor Dinwiddie.¹ He was kindly received and invited to dine. Presumably he did so and obtained his first impression of the man who was to make his future duty so difficult. The Washington diary at this point is badly mutilated and we have only torn scraps telling of his witnessing "a Great Main" of fighting cocks at Yorktown, which he left before it was finished on the offer of a seat in Colonel Lewis's chariot. He reached Mount Vernon within a few days and reported to Ann Washington the state of her husband's health; but before arrangements for the Bermuda voyage progressed very far, a letter from Lawrence announced that he was coming back to Virginia.

George Washington was soon at work again on the duties of surveyor of Culpeper County. This was his first serious struggle to earn a living. The good reward of a doubloon a day was worth working for but, though there is no discernible evidence of an ambition beyond a surveyor's career, neither is there evidence that such a career would have been permanently acceptable. It was more a situation of working steadily at a worth-while task while waiting for anything that fate might have in store for him.

It was during this period of hard work that Washington records his second illness, "a violent pleurise" which reduced him very low. This is found in his much quoted letter to William Fauntleroy, in which he proposed "as soon as I recover my strength to wait upon Miss Betsy, in hopes of a revocation of the former cruel sentence, and see if I can meet with any alteration in my favour." This badinage, for it could be nothing else, when written to a girl's grandfather about a girl several years younger than Washington, is the lighter touch, the possession of which has been persistently denied him. The mature quizzical curl to the lips of the Houdon bust portrait is sufficient proof of the existence of a natural sense of humor in Washington. Such lines are graven only by real characteristics and no complete understanding or realization of Washington is possible which does not include a careful and intelligent study of Houdon's masterpiece.

Before the year 1752 was half gone Fate rearranged the mosaic of George Washington's life. Lawrence returned from Bermuda, whither he had gone from Barbadoes and, in July, died at Mount Vernon. In November George Washington laid aside his chain and sextant for the sword and uniform of adjutant for the Southern District of Virginia. He was appointed to this position by Lieutenant-Governor Dinwiddie, November sixth, two days after he had been inducted into the grand lodge of Free Masons of Fredericksburg.

A clear view of the causes of this adjutant appointment is difficult. Doubtless, there was therein a mixture of a proper succession to the adjutancy held by Lawrence Washington and a willingness on Dinwiddie's part to please the Fairfax, Robinson, Carter, Nelson, Corbin and other influences, which approved the appointment. Probably too, the Washington influence itself was not entirely negligible from its interest in the Ohio Company venture. This last was surely a controlling reason for Dinwiddie's selection of Adjutant-Major Washington, a year later, to carry his message of protest to the French on the Ohio.

The office of district adjutant brought Washington an assured income of one hundred pounds per year and, through the interest of William Nelson, of York, he was transferred, in November of 1753, to the adjutancy of the Northern Neck and Eastern Shore, which included his home counties of Prince William, King George, Stafford, Fairfax and West-

moreland. Here began the youthful military ambition which burned with zealous brightness until it encountered the persistent belittling influences of the British regular forces, and the continuous suppressive opposition of a British royal governor.

There is little to be noted of these adjutant duties. Washington's accounts picture a loose skeleton of occupation in traveling through the assigned counties, mustering the militia, inspecting their equipment and witnessing the drills, which though crude in the extreme yet were valuable in experience to him. On October thirty-first came the first of the many great adventures with which his life was to be filled. He notes it in his diary: "I was commissioned and appointed by the Honourable Robert Dinwiddie, Esq; Governor, &c. of Virginia, to visit and deliver a letter to the Commandant of the French forces on the Ohio, and set out on the intended Journey the same day." He set out with the high enthusiasm of the crusader, for he was going to warn the hereditary enemy of his King and country to withdraw from the land which Lawrence Washington had told him were important and valuable to Virginia and the Virginians. The message he carried was fraught with important consequences and he was thrilled with youthful importance at being the envoy in such a matter.

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CHAPTER V

THE JOURNEY TO FORT LE BŒUF

GOVERNOR DINWIDDIE's ultimatum to the French, for it was an ultimatum, delivered by instruction from England, was one of many things coming under Washington's observation which strengthened and deepened his conviction that landownership was the most important factor of colonial development. His early experience with wealth was his contact with Lord Fairfax's enormous holdings in the Northern Neck; his survey work for numerous individual landholders in the different counties and the title suits and disputes that raged around these surveys and claims. Land and landownership seemed the most important thing in the daily life of the gentlemen around him and now this message from the royal Governor plainly meant war rather than the surrender of a vast land domain beyond the mountains. In this domain Washington himself held something of a stake in the form of Lawrence Washington's interest in the old Potomac Company venture. So it was with full comprehension that Major George Washington, District Adjutant of his Majesty's Colony of Virginia, left Williamsburg on a thousand-mile journey through the wilderness to deliver the ultimatum from royal authority.

He took with him the Hollander, Jacob Van Braam,¹ as his French interpreter, and at Wills Creek, later Fort Cumberland, he engaged the most skilful scout and guide on the frontier, Christopher Gist. Four other men, two of whom were experienced Indian traders, brought the total of the embassy up to six and, mounting their horses, they rode out from Gist's cabins into the forest, in the teeth of a furious storm of rain, sleet and snow.²

Because of this weather it took them a week to reach the Monongahela which ordinarily could have been done in two or three days. Here the first check was encountered. It seems to have been expected, when Washington left Williamsburg, that he would find the French at the forks of the Ohio and deliver his message to the officer in command there. But the

French Commandant had died and the outpost had been withdrawn for the winter. To deliver the message Washington must now travel several hundred miles farther into the wilderness. It was a depressing decision to make, but before starting on this more difficult journey Washington undertook to carry out the rest of Dinwiddie's instructions, which were to hold a council with the Six Nations Indians in the Ohio region and endeavor to strengthen the bonds of British friendship with them. Down the Monongahela he went, pausing at the forks of the Ohio to spend "some time in viewing the Rivers and the Land in the Fork; which I think extremely well situated for a Fort, as it has the absolute command of both Rivers." (This comment on what became the site of Fort Duquesne, later Fort Pitt and finally Pittsburgh, was really the prime cause of the outbreak of hostilities in the French and Indian War, for Governor Dinwiddie acted on Washington's suggestion and sent Captain Trent to fortify the place; the French ejected Trent; Washington, ordered to reinforce Trent, encountered La Force and the first shot of a war was fired.)

At Logstown, on the Ohio, where the council met, Washington made his first speech to the savages. It was not a bad speech for a youth of twenty-one to make to mature, experienced and wily Indian chiefs. The embassy to the French was announced, but its purpose was not set forth. The friendship of the English for the Six Nations was emphasized and Washington appealed to their vanity by asking for some of their young men to guide and protect him from the French Indians who had taken up the hatchet against the English. This was a clever way of saying that the Mingoes were not only greater and braver warriors than the white men, but were also bigger warriors than the French Indians, a diplomatic statement of telling value in dealing with these vain sons of the forest.

The Half-King, the highest chief present,³ answered with equal guile. The wily savage saw the position he had to take and was for delay. A French speech-belt of wampum would have to be returned and this was a serious step, as it was equivalent to breaking off peaceful relations and almost the same as taking up the hatchet. He wanted to know whether they could rely upon the English for actual help; protestations of friendship were not sufficient, and these Indians had not seen any evidence of British military power. The council dragged on; Major Washington was

not authorized to promise actual armed aid and less than that did not interest the Indians.

Several days passed before three chiefs and a good hunter were ready to go with Washington. Again the little party of white men turned north through the snow-clogged woods and ice-covered brush. For sixty miles they fought their way through hail, rain and sleet, to the old Indian town of Venango. Here at last they found a French garrison, but Joincaire, the Captain-Commandant, informed Washington that though he had command on the Ohio, the French general officer in command of the entire region, Le Gardeur de St. Pierre, was at Fort Le Bœuf, a hundred miles farther on. Joincaire refused to receive Washington's message, though he knew perfectly well what it was. He was, however, most hospitable, though his hospitality was a cloak to screen his efforts to win over the Six Nations Indians who were with Washington. The white men were entertained lavishly at dinner and the French officers drank freely; their tongues were loosened by the wine and they boasted that they were on the Ohio to stay, the claims of the English and their threats notwithstanding. The next day the French succeeded in getting Washington's Indians thoroughly drunk and it took all of Gist's persuasive powers to drag them northward from the warm cabins and the warmer rum. But he succeeded, and after four dreary days of heavy going through wet and swampy country, Fort Le Bœuf was reached.

Here again Washington met with the utmost courtesy; but the commandant insisted on sending for the commander of the next nearest fort before considering Dinwiddie's message. Again the French, in the interval of waiting, went to work on Washington's Indians and he records that "I can't say that ever in my Life I suffered so much Anxiety as I did in this Affair; I saw that every Strategem which the most fruitful Brain could invent, was practised, to win the Half-King to their Interest." But as a balance to this, Washington unconsciously confesses to a similar piece of maneuvering in making notes of the strength of the French fort, its arrangement, its guns, etc. Both these performances are a picture of the state of mind of the French and English in America in the eighteenth century, under which hostilities could hardly have been averted.

The answer of the French was written out and handed to Washington. It was a polite but soldier-like refusal to pay attention to any orders except

those received from the French superior officers and, in matter-of-fact phrase, assured Dinwiddie that St. Pierre would conform himself to the orders of his own general with exactness and resolution.

With extra politeness the Frenchman supplied Washington with canoes so that his return journey could be made with greater ease and comfort. His horses Washington had sent back to Venango, as they were growing weaker daily and forage was not to be had in the snow-covered region around Le Boëuf. The canoes were stocked with provisions and after some difficulty Gist again managed to get the Indians away from the French and their rum. The red men were loaded into a canoe and sent off first; Washington and Gist followed. The French had a canoe ready, well-laden with liquor and presents and put out after the Indian canoe in a last effort to detain them; but this did not turn out so well; possibly because the French interpreters were not so sober as they should have been, for Gist relates that "we had the pleasure of seeing the French overset, and the brandy and wine floating in the creek . . . we run by them and left them to shift for themselves."

Not long after this Washington's party had to step overboard, waist-deep into icy water, to work their canoe through a rocky stretch and then a carry around an ice gorge too clogged to navigate. It was exhausting labor, in freezing weather and only stout hearts and tough bodies could have carried it through. At Venango the Indians decided to quit. One hundred and thirty miles of freezing water work was enough and the opportunity for a prolonged spree on Captain Joincaire's liquor was too heavy an argument for Washington to overcome. The white men started south without them. The horses grew weaker with each day's journey, until they were no longer able to carry even their packs, so leaving them with the traders, Washington set off with Gist through the woods for Wills Creek. He had already changed to Indian clothing and now he tied himself up in a match-coat, a fur garment made of skins, and with his papers, provisions and ammunition in a shoulder-pack and carrying a gun, he started on the two-hundred-mile journey. Gist had his doubts as to the wisdom of this for Washington was not accustomed to walking, but the two made eighteen miles on their first day's march. The next day Washington's feet became sore as Gist had anticipated; they slowed their pace and met up with a French Indian who insisted on traveling along with

them, though they suspected the fellow to be dangerous. He tried several times to turn them northward by urging that they visit his cabin, but when he could not mislead them he walked on ahead, whirled suddenly and fired at them. Unhurt, both Washington and Gist rushed at him. Gist was for killing him but Washington would not agree to this, so they made the redskin march with them for several hours and when far enough from the scene of the shooting to be safe from any tracking Indians, they made him build a fire as though they intended to camp. Then they ordered him back the way they had come. Gist followed him a little distance and having seen him out of sight they left their fire burning and traveled all that night to throw the savage off their trail.

When they reached the Allegheny River, instead of its being frozen as they expected, there was a black rushing current filled with driving ice cakes between ice-packed shores. With only one poor hatchet it took them nearly all day to build a raft. At dusk they launched out, with sapling poles for oars, and half-way across they were caught in a small jam that carried them down-stream with fearful rapidity, threatening at every swing to upset the raft. Washington attempted to check their speed with his pole, but it jerked him out into the black icy torrent. He caught one of the raft logs in a desperate grip, as he went overboard and with Gist's help managed to scramble atop the raft again. Then began a desperate struggle to get to either shore, but the current was too swift. A small island loomed up ahead and by hard work and some luck they grounded into its shore ice and managed to scramble over to the land. It is surprising that they did not freeze to death that night. All of Gist's fingers and some of his toes did freeze in the long bitter darkness, but Washington escaped injury. In the morning the Allegheny was frozen solid from bank to bank and they got away without difficulty. At John Frazier's, on Turtle Creek, they rested while horses were being found for them and, in a final gesture to secure the neutrality of the Delawares (for the friendship of that tribe was a difficult thing for the English to maintain) Washington visited their Queen Aliquippa and presented her with a matchcoat and a bottle of rum, "which latter was thought much the better present of the two." But this visit and presents were wasted for the Delawares went over to the French. The day after New Year's, 1754, the travelers arrived at Gist's, on the Monongahela, and a week later Washington

reached Wills Creek. He notes that, from the time they left Fort Le Bœuf until they reached Wills Creek, there was but one day that it did not snow or rain incessantly and that the entire journey, both down and up, was a continued series of cold, wet weather. Ten days later he reached Belvoir, where he rested for a day and reported to Governor Dinwiddie, in Williamsburg, January sixteenth. Directed to write an account of his journey for the Virginia Council, which was to sit the next day, Washington labored hard to whip a report into shape from the rough memoranda and notes he had kept on the journey. To make the matter clear he drew a map of the region and marked the path of his journey thereon. Dinwiddie promptly sent the original of this report to the Williamsburg printer for publication and as promptly sent copies overseas to his Majesty's Secretary for the Colonies. The Williamsburg publication was reprinted in London as soon as it arrived there and Major George Washington, a Virginia district-adjutant, became, for a time, the talk of two hemispheres which was, most certainly, an unusual thing to happen to any young colonial American, twenty-two years of age.⁴

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CHAPTER VI

THE MARCH AGAINST THE FRENCH

ON THE map of his journey which accompanied his report to Dinwiddie, Washington noted the French design to build a chain of forts from Venango on the Allegheny, down the north bank of the Ohio, with one, of course, at the specially strategic point of the forks of that river. This one fort would largely block off the English from the entire western territory,—the territory that the Potomac Company, in which Dinwiddie was a stockholder, was planning to exploit through land titles and fur trade.

There was small chance that the French would move from their winter quarters in Venango before spring. Dinwiddie hurried his preparations and in February sent Captain William Trent with a small force to erect a fort at the forks of the Ohio, on the site Washington had pointed out. He then set in motion the necessary supporting arrangements and Major George Washington became an important factor in these. Two companies of one hundred men each were ordered raised and Washington was to march with them to reenforce Trent.

Virginia, more than any of the other colonies, felt and understood the danger of the French on the Ohio. The most frequently traveled roads from the western country led through the Potomac Valley and the Allegheny passes to the Virginia frontier settlements; yet this danger was balanced by the hope of gain from land and the western trade. It may be doubted if Dinwiddie would have been quite so keen for action had not an increase of his personal fortune been a likely result in securing the territory for England. The Governor's efforts to arouse the northern colonies met with small success. Virginia's overshadowing claims to the western country made the modest claims of Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York, seem slight in comparison, and it was but natural that these colonies should be lukewarm toward spending blood and treasure to enrich Virginia and the Virginians. The claim of the English to the western country had no better foundation than the claim of the French.

The Six Nations had ceded the land to the English, but their title to it was more of an assertion than a fact. The French claim was founded on priority of exploration, backed by the actual move of building forts toward the Ohio country, which had forestalled the English intention of doing the selfsame thing.

When Virginia took steps to increase her colonial force by six hundred men, Adjutant Washington felt entitled to a higher rank than that of major. He set about obtaining it with no false modesty and in his activities may be noticed the first indication that he did not feel entire confidence in Governor Dinwiddie's methods, for Washington's principal efforts to obtain a lieutenant-colonelcy were directed through other channels than the Governor. There were few if any trained soldiers in Virginia at that time, and such military ability as did exist had been developed in Indian fighting in the woods. In this Washington's experience was then equal to most of the Virginia militia and he did not hesitate to ask the support of members of the Council. With the self-confidence of twenty-two years, tempered by the common sense of a more mature recognition that other men had claims, at least on account of greater age, he stated his position: "I must be impartial enough to confess it [the chief command] is a charge too great for my youth and inexperience to be entrusted with. Knowing this, I have too sincere a love for my country to undertake that which may tend to the prejudice of it." But he was sure that under a skilful commander, "with my own application and diligent study of my duty, I shall be able to conduct my steps without censure, and, in time to render myself worthy of the promotion, that I shall be favored with now."¹

Washington, through his duties of Adjutant, had had as much experience with organized colonial troops as any other man and was better acquainted with the Virginia militia organization than most. He was to learn now, as he learned later, that authorizing troops was one thing and actually raising them was quite another. Questions of pay and clothing and, more important, a lack of both, hindered enlistments and it was a month before seventy-five men could be gathered at Alexandria. Captain Trent, struggling to erect a fort on the cold promontory of the forks of the Ohio, became alarmed and sent an express to Dinwiddie that the French were advancing upon him. The Governor sent Major Washington a lieutenant-colonel's commission and ordered him to march to Trent's assis-

tance. April 2, 1754, Colonel George Washington and about one hundred and fifty men set out from Alexandria to aid "in building forts and in defending the possessions of his Majesty against the attempts and hostilities of the French." This instruction was broad enough to cover all possible contingencies, had Dinwiddie supported the expedition with proper force and supplies. That this support was not given was due in a measure to the Governor's stubborn mishandling of the Virginia Legislature and to an exaggerated self-importance and an official blindness to everything but the superiority of the crown power and the inferiority and unimportance of the colonial.

Colonel Joshua Fry, a personal friend of Dinwiddie, was appointed Colonel, in supreme command of the expedition, but he died without having caught up with Washington's marching troops. This left the command of the expedition entirely in Washington's hands and although Fry had been instructed by Dinwiddie to act on the defensive; to "desire" the French to retire and only if they persisted in remaining, to repel force by force, it is difficult to construe these instructions in any other way than an authorization to open hostilities. There is no evidence that these rather ambiguous instructions were communicated to Washington. After Fry's death we find Dinwiddie writing (June twenty-seventh) that he wished Washington had suspended his advance toward Red Stone until he could be joined by other forces. These other forces existed solely in Dinwiddie's imagination, for they never reached Washington.

It was one of those casual neglects, so common to certain types of so-called executives, which permit them afterward to justify their course no matter what the outcome of the event may be.

This advance of Washington's troops, if not actually war, was a movement that could hardly fail to produce war and it is curious that the first military movement of Washington's life was so entirely like many of the military movements of his subsequent career. He was ordered forward before he had collected an adequate force, before they were properly trained and before they were properly equipped. Years afterward, in the Revolutionary War, there were but few occasions when Washington could delay his movement until his troops were numerous enough, until they were fully equipped and completely trained. In most cases he had to move and trust to Providence for results.

The little body of men moved north until they reached Cresap's, near the South Branch of the Potomac, where they were met with the news that the French had seized Trent's fort at the forks of the Ohio and the garrison had been allowed to march back to Virginia. The French took over the fortification, finished it after a fashion and called it Fort Duquesne.

Washington immediately assembled his officers in council of war and, while his small force admittedly could not hope to accomplish anything against the French, it was thought best to continue the march to Red Stone, about thirty-seven miles from Fort Duquesne. A strong factor in this decision to continue the advance was the disheartening effect of a retreat upon the Indian allies of the English. The Indian problem was always the momentous one in frontier America and its influence, both positive and negative, affected most of the political questions of colonial times. Lurking in the background of all decisions of policy, precisely as the savages themselves lurked in the forest, the Indian was a surprisingly large factor in the life of George Washington, and on this particular occasion became the overbalancing one.

An express was sent galloping to Williamsburg to inform the Governor of the advance and Washington wrote that they could hold Red Stone "till we are reenforced, unless the rising of the waters shall admit the enemy's cannon to be convey'd up in canoes and then, I flatter myself, we shall . . . get timely notice of it, and make a good retreat." The French were reported to have enticed certain of the Six Nations to their side, and Washington advised Dinwiddie to invite the Cherokees, Catawba and Chickasaw Indians to join the English, as much for their value in scouting and fighting in the woods, as for the added man power. Washington knew that only Indians could cope successfully with hostile Indians in forest fighting, and the French northern Indians far outnumbered the few southern red men that were willing to act with the Virginians. He sent a speech to the Half-King, dwelling in rather optimistic terms on the advance of the English; and speaking disparagingly of "the treacherous French." He urged the chiefs to come to a council-fire as soon as possible and signed the speech "Conotacarius," the name by which Washington's great-grandfather was known to the savages. This was a touch of Indian dramatics, a bit of frontier propaganda. It meant "Devourer of Villages" and it may have had some effect upon the Half-King.

Reenforcements were slowly, but very slowly, converging toward Washington: one hundred and fifty men were coming from Winchester, three hundred and fifty from North Carolina and two hundred more from Maryland. Had these forces reached him in time the story of his march toward the forks of the Ohio would have been quite different.

The French had time to complete Captain Trent's fortification and to mount their cannon therein. They sent out a scouting party, thirty or forty strong, under La Force and Jumonville, the latter of whom, at the price of his life, brought George Washington again into public notice in far-off England and, in what was to prove of far more importance, to the notice of the American colonies.

The struggle with royal prerogative in the colonies was slowly taking shape. Every appropriation desired by a royal governor, no matter for what purpose the money was needed, was obtained, usually, at the cost of a surrender of some gubernatorial power to the Legislature. The beginnings of the Revolutionary War were already in sight though they were far from being recognized as such. In Virginia, Dinwiddie's effort to obtain troops and supplies for holding the forks of the Ohio against the French was successful to the amount of a ten-thousand-pound appropriation; but the House of Burgesses granted the sum only on condition that a committee of the House act with the Governor in expending it.

The Governor grew wroth, writhed mightily and may have sworn with such emphasis as his Scotch upbringing permitted; but he had to have the money and he signed the act; then he wrote complainingly about it to the Lords of Trade. Very different in tone was Washington's letter to the Governors of Pennsylvania and Maryland. In it there is nothing but the soldier pleading for means to carry out the orders by which he believed the protection of these colonies could be secured: "It was the glowing zeal I owe my country that influenced me to impart these advices and my inclination prompted me to do it to you as I know you are solicitous for the public weal and warm in this interesting cause; that should rouse from the lethargy we have fallen into, the heroic spirit of every free-born Englishman and attest the rights and privileges of our king (if we don't consult the benefit of ourselves) and rescue from the invasions of a usurping enemy, our Majesty's property, his dignity, and land."⁸

Here are the romance and high superlatives of youth. Washington was pleading a patriotic duty as he saw it and the extravagant diction did not seem out of place to him. The nerves of Washington's small force were tightened by rumors of French scouting parties having been sent out from Duquesne and an Indian brought word that one of these parties was but a half dozen miles away. Washington detached half of his force to search the woods and though they failed to find the French and he could confidently charge off the report as a mistake, it did not greatly ease the strain of the situation.

The excitement died down, but still no reenforcements arrived and Washington determined on a canoe trip down the Youghiogheny and the Monongahela to test the truth of the frontier rumor that clear water transportation was to be had to Red Stone. With Lieutenant West, three soldiers and one Indian, he paddled down-stream until the swift-flowing current made navigation dangerous. Then they landed and built a boat; one of those rough, practical frontier craft, half raft, half flatboat, which good workmen could construct from live timber in a few hours. In this they reached Turkey Foot, the junction of the Yough, Laurel Hill Creek and Castelman's River. From Turkey Foot they descended the Monongahela River about ten miles and were then obliged to come ashore near what was known later as the Ohio Pile Falls, which were impassable. Here was another currently believed frontier story found baseless: Washington was becoming accustomed to false reports and factless rumors and was slowly acquiring the habit of refusing to be stampeded by frantic tales from terrified inhabitants of massacres and Indian attacks.

He learned also what to believe, and when Half-King, whose measure he had taken on that grueling journey to Fort Le Bœuf, sent a message that a party of French were advancing, he had no doubt of its truth. He collected his wagons and baggage "behind two natural entrenchments" and "prepar'd a charming field for an encounter."⁴

While he waited for the French, hoping against hope for reenforcements, he wrote again to Dinwiddie, a letter that apparently had much to do with cooling that pompous Governor's feeling toward him. The Governor's attitude toward all Virginians was one of patronizing superiority, that of the royal governor toward the colonial plebeian. The veneer of his friendliness for Washington quickly dissolved when the creature of

his appointment dared display independence of thought or pointed out unpalatable facts.

When the scale of pay of the Virginia regiment was fixed by the military committee of the Burgesses on a parsimonious plane, below that of any of the other colonies, the officers were for resigning in a body; only a sense of honor restrained them until others could be appointed in their place. Washington wrote that he was "heartily concerned that the officers have such real cause to complain of the Committee's resolves; and still more to find my inclinations prone to second their grievances." They were well aware of their obligations to the Governor and Washington himself disclaimed all intention of declining to serve longer, but would prefer to serve without pay as a volunteer rather than "upon such ignoble terms."⁵

The service and hardship in the field were much greater for the Virginia troops than those of any of the other colonies and Washington could not see, he wrote, why "the lives of his Majesties subjects in Virginia should be of less value than of those in other parts of his American dominions."

Possibly there was in this last statement a dim recollection of Major Lawrence Washington's stories of the Cartagena campaign, and in a letter to Colonel Fairfax, now missing, but whose context may be judged from Dinwiddie's comments thereon, Lieutenant-Colonel George Washington had dared to contrast the pay of the colonials with that of the British regular army officers. The leaven of the Revolution was beginning to work; the colonial officer was thinking of himself in comparison with the sacred British Army. He no longer looked up to the Red-coat but across, on a level with him.

The Governor answered at length and expressed "both concern and surprise to find a gentleman, whom I so particularly considered, and from whom I had so great expectations and hopes appear so differently for himself, and give me leave to say, mistakenly, as I think, concurring with complaints in general so ill founded."⁶

Just where the complaints were ill-founded, when the fact was as Washington stated, the Governor did not condescend to point out. Rather inconsistently too, it was this same military committee that Dinwiddie complained of so caustically to the home government; but when the com-

mittee's actions were criticized by Virginia officers, the creatures he had appointed, he straightway condoned the committee's conduct and in complete reversal of form appeared as its champion.

But before Washington received Dinwiddie's letter actual fighting had begun. The Half-King sent in another runner with word that he himself had tracked the French party to an obscure hidden camp, and at once the young Virginia officer marched with all his force, except a guard to protect his encampment, "in a heavy rain, in a night as dark as pitch, along a path scarce broad enough for one man."⁷

About sunrise they reached the camp of the Half-King and Washington conferred with that keen old fighter as to the best plan to follow. The situation was unfortunate in every particular. Two armed parties of hereditary enemies searching for each other in the woods and the inexperienced commander of one of them seeking advice from an Indian chief whose sole idea of an enemy was to lift his scalp as speedily as possible. There is very little doubt that the French were as greatly to blame, if it is a question of blame, as was Washington. The Frenchmen were simply an armed scouting party and that they encountered a stronger party of English was their individual misfortune. Frontier conditions were such that an outbreak of hostilities could hardly have been avoided, and it was only a question of time when an armed collision was bound to occur. It seems not to have occurred to Washington that fighting could have been avoided. Two of Half-King's young men slipped away and returned with exact information of the French position and Washington's men and Indians crept out through the forest. The Half-King and the Oneida chief, Scaroyady, directed the Indians, who moved like ghosts through the morning mists until they had silently surrounded the doomed Frenchmen. The Virginians got fairly close in before they were discovered. Firing at once broke out on all sides, the Indian war-whoops ringing amid the crash of muskets. It was warm work while it lasted but, as usual, the advantage lay with the attacking party which caught the French off their guard. In fifteen minutes all was over and the Indians were busy scalping the dead, which numbered half a score and included Ensign Jumonville, whose fate was to arouse much contention. The French captain La Force was in command of the party and was among those captured. This officer was one of the most enterprising on the frontier and the

Half-King was for killing him at once, but Washington intervened and all the French prisoners were brought in safe.

Some few of the French escaped (one was afterward found by the Indians and brought into the English camp in a starving condition). The Half-King immediately sent runners with a scalp to the Six Nations telling them of the battle and inviting them to take up the hatchet against the French. Washington marched the prisoners back to the camp at Great Meadows and from there forwarded them on to Williamsburg.

The die was now cast and the shots fired in this early morning fight in far-off Pennsylvania were soon echoed in the roar of cannon in Europe.

Washington's next letter was to Colonel Fry, calling for immediate reinforcement, for he had already learned the military lesson that every successful attack brings on a counter-attack from the defeated party. "We must either quit our ground," he wrote, "and retreat to you, or fight very unequal numbers, which I will do, before I will give up an Inch of what we have gained."⁸

Neither Dinwiddie nor the home government could complain that their twenty-two-year-old lieutenant colonel of Virginians did not know the reason he had been ordered forward into the wilderness.

CHAPTER VII

THE SURRENDER OF FORT NECESSITY

AT THE first opportunity Washington answered Dinwiddie's rebuke at painstaking length,¹ a useless proceeding with a royal governor who could not conceive of his decisions and arrangements being other than more generous than the ungrateful colonials deserved. His Scotch wit and the difficulty in dealing with him is to be judged by the argument in his letter to Washington that "The first Objectn. to the Pay, if made at all, sh'd have been made before engaging in the Service." Washington had pointed out that the pay question had not been decided upon by the Legislature until after the officers had entered the service and marched as far into the wilderness as Wills Creek. He further reminded Dinwiddie that the Massachusetts colonials in the Louisburg expedition received the same pay as the British regulars. But these facts meant little to the stubborn Governor. Washington knew that any argument was hopeless and urged his officers to accept the established pay.

He took pains to present the case in such wise as to "shew your Honour that our complaints are not frivolous but founded upon strict Reason." He was to discover that strict reason meant little to a royal governor, and that facts were easily brushed aside where the power to do so lay in the hands of an obstinate man. An exasperating personal grievance was the lack of a sufficient allowance to enable Washington, as commander-in-chief, to support a proper table. This was a sore trial to a man who enjoyed good-fellowship and whose good-fellowship so evidently was enjoyed by the officers who served under him. Nevertheless he urged them to postpone their grievance and wait for a future adjustment and, if anything were needed to establish the feeling of these men for Washington, it is found in the address presented by them when he resigned, a little later, from the service. In that address the officers regretted the loss of "such an excellent Commander, so sincere a Friend and so affable a Companion." But before Washington resigned he was to experience his

second battle and first defeat, of which he did not write that there was "something charming in the sound" of its whistling bullets. Later and closer acquaintance with the deadly purpose of this sound destroyed all of that youthful romanticism. The small victory over La Force and Jumonville brought to Washington's camp an influx of Indian families, whose young men and warriors attached themselves to his fighting force. This was the Indian method of following victory and deserting defeat. They became pensioners on Washington's commissariat whereby, at the high cost of feeding nearly a hundred healthy appetites, he obtained about twenty scouts who were, at best, undisciplined and indifferent fighting men. The difficulties with these Indians were only just beginning and Washington begged Dinwiddie to send on Andrew Montour, the Huron half-breed interpreter. He was well aware of his own inability to deal intelligently with the savages and, it must be admitted, demonstrated that inability by offending those difficult people. He used them frequently for scouting, so frequently that the savages conceived the idea that they were being overworked while the white soldiers did nothing. This was only the nervousness of the inexperienced commander, running afoul of the Indian's laziness. He knew that the Indians were better than the white men at scouting, but the result was unfortunate.

Immediately after Colonel Fry's death, Governor Dinwiddie, with a fine disregard of everything necessary for the success of the expedition, appointed Colonel James Innes, of North Carolina, and a personal friend, as another absentee commander-in-chief, while the entire management of affairs continued to devolve upon Washington.

The appointment drew no protest from Washington, but he felt forced to complain of the exasperating conduct of a Captain James Mackay, who had joined the troops at Wills Creek with an independent company from North Carolina. Mackay held a commission from the King of England and he refused to take orders from Lieutenant-Colonel Washington, whose commission was signed by a colonial governor, or to allow his men to do any fatigue work. Colonel Washington did everything in his power to keep relations amicable and refrained from giving orders that could affect Mackay's men, but asked the Governor for a decision, as the situation was impossible. Dinwiddie, as usual where the question was one between royal and colonial authority, dodged the issue in a slippery

manner. He informed Washington that Colonel Innes was commander-in-chief and that he, Dinwiddie, had granted brevet lieutenant commissions to Captain Clarke, commander of an independent company from New York, and to Mackay, and that Washington was to be second in command, Clarke third and Mackay fourth. This, as a solution, was absurd. The question was, did a lieutenant-colonel of the colonial forces have the right to command a captain who held a commission signed by the King, and this question Dinwiddie did not answer. To Mackay, Dinwiddie wrote that he hoped he "would lay aside any little Punctilios in rank" which was a virtual admission that Mackay's contention was well-grounded and, of course, after receiving such a letter, there was no possible chance of Mackay's paying attention to Washington's orders.

The middle of June arrived with no intelligence of the advance of the French from Fort Duquesne, and Washington, with the purpose of his expedition always before him, resumed work on the road to Red Stone. If he had not troops enough to move against the French, this at least was progress. Reenforcements would reach him eventually and he was moving forward. He could neither stand still nor retreat without risking the alliance with the Six Nations of Indians, a loss that would be almost more serious to the English than that of a battle. The clogs and delays fretted him and weighed down his spirits until he wrote to the Governor, June twelfth, "God knows when we shall [be] able to do anything for to deserve better of our Country."

Another of the many Indian council-fires were lighted and Washington spoke in answer to the speech which the chiefs of the Six Nations sent to Dinwiddie. It was a difficult speech to make, for the English had little to show to people whose only understanding of war was a defeated enemy and many scalps, but he did the best he could. He reminded them of the seizure of their lands by the French, of the friendship of the English and that it was to protect the Indian rights that this expedition was advancing. This was rather an exaggeration, but high talk was necessary. He invited all their families to come to the English camp, and, while it was the most practical and perfectly proper thing to say, there may have been some enjoyed maliciousness in his advice that these Indians should go to Governor Dinwiddie, who would protect and clothe and feed them "during the war."

Some Delaware chiefs were present at this council and they were more than half friendly to the French. Their influence was felt and, despite Washington's large statements, the smallness of his force was an effective damper upon the Indians' scalping enthusiasm, which was never warm unless the prospect of victory was very great. Washington's eloquence left the Indians cold. They left his encampment almost in a body and made their way back to the Great Meadows. There the Delawares vanished into the woods and the Senecas and other friendly savages hung around in gloomy mood. Washington sent Montour after them but they refused to return. Then came the news that a strong force of French were advancing from Fort Duquesne and a hurried council of war decided that a stand should be made at Gist's settlement. The working parties were called in and the English retreated. Further intelligence induced another council to decide to retreat all the way back to Wills Creek; but when Fort Necessity in the Great Meadows was reached, the troops were too exhausted to move farther and a stand was decided upon.

The little stockade fort was in the midst of open fields and Washington has been much criticized by amateur soldiers for attempting to defend what they call an indefensible position; but such ideas spring largely from attempts to show how much wiser these amateurs are than Washington. The contention that Fort Necessity was in the open, exposed to fire from surrounding high ground, is incorrect. The high ground is there, but no musket-ball could carry the distance from it to the stockade, which was surrounded by level ground devoid of cover within musket-shot. His officers, in council, decided that the men could not march much farther and there was no place between Great Meadows and Wills Creek so well adapted to defense as Fort Necessity. The French were steadily overtaking the English and to be caught in the woods, or in some of the hill defiles, by a superior force would mean absolute disaster. Two days were spent in strengthening the works before the French scouts appeared. All of the Indians had deserted Washington before this, slipping off almost unobserved. Conrad Weiser is quoted as saying that the savages were greatly dissatisfied with the way Washington used them; that he treated them like slaves, insisted on their being continuously out on scouting duty, taking all the risks, giving them no rest and few presents. Weiser's statements, as a Pennsylvanian, jealous and antagonistic to Virginia's

frontier claims, must be discounted, and though Washington's high opinion of the value of the Indians as scouts lends color to this charge of his continuous use of them, the reason for so doing thus becomes distinctly different and the natural laziness of the savage helps to an understanding of Washington's handling of them. Behind it all, however, lay the Indian keen watchfulness that found out the strength of the French, saw the weakness of the English and declined to be caught upon the losing side. Long before the French muskets spoke from the edge of the forest the last Indian had silently vanished from Fort Necessity.

The French and Indian force that opened fire on the fort that rainy morning of July third, numbered about seven hundred. All day long the firing continued; the English steadily losing men until a third of the garrison (about thirty killed and seventy wounded) were put out of action. Night had fallen and the red flashes from the French muskets were creeping closer and closer when a parley was agreed to. Both sides were, apparently, discouraged; but Washington was in the worse plight, for while the French could retreat, he could not. His ammunition was low, the rain had ruined most of it; his provisions would not last a week, thanks to the heavy drain upon them by his Indian allies who had now run off, and there had been no word of reenforcement to encourage him in holding out. It was clear to those inside the Fort Necessity stockade that continued resistance would end in an entire massacre. It was not known to the English, of course, that the French offer of a parley was made because their troops were equally worn out and their Indians, disappointed in not gaining an immediate victory, had threatened to desert with the coming of daylight.

The French call for a parley was answered by sending out Captain Jacob Van Braam, who was supposed to understand their language, who brought back their terms in writing which he translated verbally to Washington and his officers. They sounded fair to the desperate English, for they offered a capitulation with all the honors of war. Unfortunately, Van Braam's knowledge of French was of the rough-and-ready variety. He had, in 1753, translated for Washington the word Illinois as "*isles Noires*," and he now passed over a phrase referring to the prisoners captured in the Jumonville affair "*deux cadets et generalement les prisonniers qu'ils nous ont faits dans l'assassinat du Sieur de Jumonville*" in

such wise that neither Washington nor Captain Mackay noticed anything wrong with it. They signed it, as the best way out of a bad situation, and, the next morning, July 4, 1754, marched out of the stockade with drums beating and colors flying and continued steadily on the road to Wills Creek. All their horses and cattle had been killed during the fighting and they were compelled to carry their wounded and what baggage they could.

On account of the word "*l'assassinat*," this capitulation was a plague to Washington for a long time thereafter. It was a shrewd bit of cleverness on the part of the French, and to obtain Washington's signature to such an admission was a triumph even greater than the surrender of Fort Necessity itself. Captain Mackay, still claiming precedence of rank, signed the capitulation ahead of Washington. Captains Van Braam and Robert Stobo were held by the French as hostages for the return of the two cadets captured in the Jumonville skirmish, and Washington had the mortification of having Governor Dinwiddie place a strained construction upon this article of the capitulation and refuse to allow those cadets to go back to Canada. The stubborn Governor's misconstruction of this part of the capitulation agreement was on a par with those historians who have claimed that by article vi, Washington bound himself not to operate against the French for one year.²

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CHAPTER VIII

RESIGNATION FROM THE VIRGINIA REGIMENT

WASHINGTON reached Williamsburg and filed his report with Governor Dinwiddie, July eleventh. It was printed in the *Virginia Gazette* and reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. How much of it was composed by Mackay and how much was Washington's responsibility can not be discovered. Mackay's signature precedes Washington's. As printed it was rather a remarkable report, thoroughly in keeping, it must be confessed, with the approved military practise which always governs the defeated party. There are discrepancies. Washington's diary gives the impression that Fort Necessity was a work requiring some days to construct; but this report calls it a small intrenchment, hastily thrown up on the morning of July third and that there was no time to finish it before the French appeared about eleven A. M. The French loss is put at three hundred men, which was nearly half of the attacking force, although no assault was made on the fort, and the French victory was definitely fixed as due to the non-arrival of expected English reinforcements.

The reaction throughout Maryland and Pennsylvania was even more bitter than in Virginia and was not lightened by the realization of these colonies that they had contributed nothing to support the Virginia troops. Conrad Weiser's criticism that Washington would take no advice from the Indians seems somewhat like an advertising of himself as the only wise Indian agent. He had not heard, evidently, of Washington's conference with Half-King in the Jumonville affair.

The troops who returned to Virginia with Washington were in as bad shape as troops could be after months of grueling labor, of forced marching and the depression that comes from a complete defeat. But Dinwiddie, with the amazing composure of a lord of the manor, issued orders to Washington to recruit his force immediately to three hundred men and march them to Wills Creek, making at the same time the brilliant suggestion that a detachment proceed to Logstown to destroy the corn there and also at Fort Duquesne.

The Governor was a remarkable optimist. Virginia had been straining every nerve for months to accomplish precisely these results and to destroy Duquesne into the bargain. Had Washington been properly supported and timely reenforced when he was in the neighborhood of Red Stone these things might have been possible, but now, when his force had been defeated and driven back a hundred miles or more, Dinwiddie blandly suggested the immediate accomplishment of the very thing that had proved impossible.

If such things did not weaken Washington's respect for properly constituted royal authority, they at least created a healthy doubt as to the wisdom of that authority in sending such a governor to Virginia. To what extent Governor Dinwiddie, representing the King and Parliament, lessened Washington's respect for the British Government can not, of course, be gauged; but such things subconsciously prepared his mind, thus early, to question the wisdom and justice of royal decisions as to American affairs.

The hopelessness of making Dinwiddie understand drove Washington to write to the Honorable William Fairfax August 11, 1754, analyzing the situation. The state of the Virginia forces, which was the reason the Governor gave for moving immediately against the French, was exactly the reason why such a move could not be made "without a large addition to them." The obstacles were pointed out painstakingly: clothing, provisions, supplies and accouterments of all kinds and a complete lack of money for the recruiting service. Dinwiddie seems to have thought he had only to issue an order to accomplish a thing, though the accomplishment depended upon other activities, past and present, which he had entirely neglected. Washington was to encounter much of this same attitude in the Continental Congress, in later years.

There is no record of Washington's directly answering this order of Dinwiddie and matters moved slowly into an impossible tangle. Pay for the officers was long overdue, there was sickness in the regiment and the men were deserting with frequency; there was doubt as to the military law and it was becoming more and more difficult to maintain proper discipline. Washington felt obliged to report the situation truthfully, and the Governor, instead of bestirring himself to remedy matters, took refuge in an increasing petulance toward his Lieutenant-Colonel, which burst

forth finally when Washington protested against Dinwiddie's appointing Colin Campbell as his deputy adjutant and allotting him his pay from Washington's salary, to the amount of half of that modest stipend. The petulant Governor's answer to this justifiable protest, when none of the other Virginia adjutants had to pay their deputies so large a proportion of their salary, was to reaffirm Campbell's pay and order Washington to the frontier at Wills Creek.

The next manifestation of Dinwiddie's peculiar mental process was his adjustment, as he considered it, of the rank controversy between the colonial officers and those of the independent companies whose commissions were signed by the King. To settle this he reorganized the Virginia regiment into ten companies and decreed that no Virginia officer could hold a higher rank than that of captain. This was his strange original method of compromise between the colonial and royal commissions; it was a subterfuge of timidity and an exercise of power which could be called into question only by those unable to make a fight against it. Washington's answer to this move, which would have reduced him to a position where he could be commanded by inexperienced and junior officers, was resignation.

Colonel William Fitzhugh, of Maryland, urged him to continue in the service and pledged Governor Sharpe to an arrangement that Washington would not be brought in contact with any of the Maryland independent companies. Washington's reply, November 15, 1754, showed his feeling; "You make mention in your letter of my continuing in the Service, and retaining my Colo's Commission. This idea has filled me with surprise; for if you think me capable of holding a commission that has neither rank nor emolument annexed to it, you must entertain a very contemptible opinion of my weakness, and believe me to be more empty than the Commission itself." He assured Fitzhugh that it "was to obey the call of Honour, and the advice of my Friends, I declined it, and not to gratify any desire I had to leave the military line. My inclinations are strongly bent to arms." It was fortunate for his country that these inclinations suffered an early check and made possible the gradual development which, years later, found expression in the statement that the first wish of his heart was to see the scourge of war banished from the earth.

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CHAPTER IX

BRADDOCK'S DEFEAT AND OTHER THINGS

THE next four months were busy ones for Washington. He was at last free to attend to his personal concerns without waiting for the grudging permission of a crabbed governor. He settled his military accounts in Williamsburg and traveled back to Winchester on this business, where there is a glimpse of his natural kindliness and love of children in the small sums he distributed to Richard Stephenson's youngsters and of a largesse which he gave to two wounded soldiers of the Virginia regiment. The entries in Washington's accounts of his open-handed charity and the pleasure he took in making gifts to children are valuable lights upon his character. There was always a soft spot in his heart for the men of the Virginia regiment; later the Continental soldier occupied this preferred position, but before the Revolutionary War, Colonel Washington, though he knew what scamps many of the old soldiers of the Virginia regiment were, knew also what frightfully hard service they had seen and how gallantly they had fought under heavy odds, and appeals to his charity from any of them met with a ready reception.

In this period too are the first indications of tooth troubles in the expense entries for dental work and cleansers. Washington's tooth difficulties may have been due to his hard frontier fare and the nervous tension under which he worked, for they began at the age of twenty-two or twenty-three and continued throughout his life. He was, as his ledger accounts show, unusually careful of his teeth; the purchases of "sponge" tooth brushes by the dozen, of tinctures of myrrh and other dentifrices and bills for dental work are too numerous to admit of any other conclusion. His first tooth was extracted in April, 1756, and one by one he lost the others, though he fought a hard but losing fight to retain them. The last one went in 1790 and it should be remembered that while George Washington was carrying the troubles, cares and anxieties of a nation upon his shoulders, he was being plagued and bothered by his teeth. It is certainly hard to be

a general, a president or even a decent patriot when one's teeth are troublesome.

He cleared up his understanding of his title to Mount Vernon by paying James Mercer £2:2:0 for a legal opinion on the devise of the estate and the negroes; set his affairs in better order than they had been heretofore and enjoyed the relaxations of visits to Belvoir and Fredericksburg, with billiards and cards as lighter diversions. He added to his negroes by purchasing several at Colonel Champe's sale and was settling down into the quiet life of a Virginia planter when a letter from Captain Robert Orme, aide to Major-General Edward Braddock, arrived at Mount Vernon. It reached Washington March 14, 1755, and he answered it the next day, confessing his inclination to serve as a volunteer in the hope of attaining "a small degree of knowledge in the Military Art." He expected to meet Braddock at Alexandria, but the settlement of affairs at Mount Vernon delayed him. He sent to Braddock a small sketch-map of the country through which the troops would have to operate, but this was probably destroyed at the Monongahela, as it has not come to light. Washington and Braddock met for the first time at Frederick, Maryland, May first, and on May tenth, at Fort Cumberland, it was announced that "Mr. Washington is appointed Aide de Camp to His Excellency General Braddock."¹

Washington was now twenty-three years old, but his knowledge of human nature was more mature than his age. He wrote to the Speaker of the House, to William Byrd, to Carter Burwell and others to whom he felt that an explanation of his conduct in joining Braddock was due, after having refused to serve longer with the Virginia regiment. These men Washington considered his friends; they ranked high in the Virginia government, but it is to be noted that Washington ignored the highest position of all and that Governor Dinwiddie received no letter from him until after Braddock's defeat. Then a sense of duty as the ranking colonial officer and a proper politeness toward the Governor of his country moved Major Washington to send an account of the battle at the Monongahela.

Before leaving Mount Vernon to the management of his best-liked brother, John Augustine, Washington wrote to the Honorable William Fairfax: "I cannot think of quitting Fairfax without embracing this last opportunity of bidding you farewell. This day I set out for Wills Creek,

where I expect to meet the General" and in honest pride of his neighboring town he added "Alexandria has been honoured with 5 Governors in Consultation; a happy presage I hope, not only of the success of this Expedition, but for our little Town . . . I had the honour to be introduced to the Governors; and of being well receiv'd by them all." He was especially pleased with Governor Shirley, of Massachusetts, and hoped the conference would bring about unanimity of action among the colonies.

In the Braddock campaign the plastic character of George Washington was first molded, with rough pressure, into the general shape of its final form. The romance of the high Roman patriotism of Addison's *Cato* was still vivid in Washington's mind, but that idealism was being colored and modified by the hard daily experience with British regulars in the Maryland forests and mountains. Again the young Virginia officer found time hanging heavy on his hands, when he had expected that his duties would be pressing and important, and again he had recourse to letter-writing between the dragging intervals of spasmodic, feverish activity and the long waits for wagons, for money and supplies of this and that. Even in the Fort Mifflin campaign the year before, he had tried to enliven the dull hours by an exchange of letters with ladies whom he knew and liked. Mrs. Sarah Carlyle (sister to George William Fairfax) answered one of Washington's letters, in June, 1754: "Those pleasing reflections on the hours past ought to be banished out of your thoughts, you have now a nobler prospect of preserving your Country from the Insult of an Enemy and as God has blessed your first Attempt, hope he may Continue his blessing, and on your return Who knows but fortune may have, reserved for you Sum unknown She, that may recompence you for all the Tryals past." From which may be judged the general tenor of the correspondence between Washington and his feminine friends in his early twenties. The masculine romance of twenty-two years in eighteenth-century Virginia was not greatly different from that of the twentieth, and George Washington evidently liked to revel in what he thought was a romantic melancholy. Curiously, too, some of the letters which he wrote to Mrs. George William (Sally Cary) Fairfax, whose friendship has been over-emphasized, are marked in his letter book as "Not sent," a procedure justifying the same surmise in the case of those early letters to friends Robin, John and the other Sally.

The letters that passed between Washington, Mrs. Carlyle and Mrs. George William Fairfax during the Fort Necessity campaign have not survived. The Braddock campaign correspondence with these two ladies did not commence until June, 1755, when Washington wrote Mrs. Carlyle and Mrs. Fairfax from Wills Creek begging the favor of again corresponding with them, as he had done in the last campaign.

George Washington held himself too much indebted to the Fairfax family to be indifferent to any shadow of abatement of its friendship. "I shou'd be glad to hear," he wrote to John Augustine Washington, "you live in Harmony and good fellowship with the family at Belvoir, as it is in their power to be very serviceable upon many occasions to us, as young beginners. I wou'd advise your visiting often as one step towards it; the rest, if any more is necessary, your own good sense will sufficiently dictate; for to that Family I am under many obligations, particularly to the old Gentleman. Mrs. Fairfax and Mrs. Spearing express'd an inclination to hear whether I lik'd [mutilated] this place (with my charge safe),² you may therefore acquaint them that I met with no other interruption than the difficulty of getting Horses after I found her's for want of Shoes grew lame."³

The elder brother's advice to a younger in the above letter is delightfully naïve. Captious critics have stigmatized it as a cold, calculating and self-seeking letter but an unbiased analysis reveals nothing but a frank, youthful expression of a valued friendship; valued as much for the friendship as for the material advantages derived therefrom.

That George Washington felt perturbed at the possible existence of a cause for rebuke from Mrs. Fairfax is easily understood in this light and that he felt bound to straighten out such a misunderstanding is quite as much so. His rather extravagant description that to be honored with her "correspondence" would make him "Happier than the Day is long"⁴ is nothing beyond a plea for an assurance that there was no cloud between the Washington and Fairfax friendship; if it were anything more, the anticlimax of the prosaic paragraph that follows would hardly have been created: "Please to make my Complts. to Miss Hannah, and to Mr. Bryan to whom I shall do myself the pleasr. of writing as soon as I hear he is returned from Westmoreland."

If other letters passed during the Braddock campaign they have not

come to light. There is only that sprightly round-robin from Sally Fairfax and the other young ladies at Belvoir, on Washington's return from the blood-stained field of the Monongahela, a round-robin quite understandable under the circumstances, as being addressed to a young Virginian who had returned in safety and with much honor from the greatest battle that had ever been fought, up to that time, by Virginia troops.

Braddock commenced his march from Fort Cumberland, June seventh; Pennsylvania had promised to build him a road through her mountains but Braddock had seen enough of the country through which such a road would pass; he had ridden down from Frederick, Maryland, with Washington and had expressed his opinion of it with blasphemous frankness.

Of the Braddock fiasco, a great deal has been written which has small foundation in discernible fact. General Braddock's temper was short and it became shorter as misunderstanding after misunderstanding arose between the colonists and himself. Breaches of contracts in supplies, in furnishing wagons and in agreements of all kinds with the country-folk, heightened the General's irascibility to the boiling point; he could not see the difference between the European systems, functioning with the accustomedness of long practise and the utter lack of system in sparsely settled frontier regions, unaccustomed to the work necessary to support a large body of men, moving in a wilderness where even the road had to be cut through before them. Washington put the blame where it belonged, on the individual contractors, but Braddock swore it was because of public supineness and that the country was lacking in honor and honesty. The Aide and the General had many warm disputes on this head and Washington found that Braddock would never give up "any point he asserts, let it be ever so incompatible with Reason."⁵

This letter and the one of June twenty-eighth to his brother, John Augustine, in which Washington states that he urged Braddock to push forward to Fort Duquesne with a strong advance party in light marching order, seem to be the basis of the tradition that Washington advised Braddock how best to meet the attack of the enemy in the woods, the best way to arrange his force, how to take advantage of the experience of the Virginia Indian fighters and to use the Indians themselves; to all of which Braddock is said to have turned a deaf and disdainful ear. It is probable that Washington gave Braddock his best advice when it was

asked for, but it is doubtful that he volunteered such information or that Braddock ever asked him for technical military opinions.

June seventeenth Washington was stricken with "viol't Fevers and Pns in my h'd.wch con'd w'out the l't Intermission till the 23 foll'g.when I was reliev'd by the Genls. absol'ty ordering the Phy'ns to give me Doctr.Ja's Powder,w'ch is the most excel't mede. in the W'd for it gave me immed.ease and removed my Fev'rs and other Comp'ts in 4 Days time." (Doctor James's fever powders were as famous as Doctor Dover's had been half a century previous.) Too weak to ride, Washington was carried in a covered wagon for a time, but the jolting was too painful and he was left in a tent on the side of the road to await the arrival of Dunbar's rear-guard, two days' march behind. The illness was severe, but Washington was so keen to share in the glory of the anticipated capture of Duquesne that Braddock promised he should be brought up to the front before the fort was reached.

The rapid march urged by Washington was ignored, for the European practise of leveling small hills and bridging every brook, slowed down the progress of the troops so that they were four days advancing twelve miles. Now and then a straggling soldier was scalped by the French Indians who lurked along the line of march and kept the Red-coat regulars keyed to a nervous tension that was weakening to the morale. The heavy forest cover through which they marched was not calculated to inspire troops accustomed to the broad open spaces of Europe. The trees opened before them as they moved forward and closed behind them, silent and dim in the perpetual twilight of the woods. It did not help matters much to hear the occasional shot or shriek that told of another hapless victim, nor was it steadying to pick up the dead, marked with a strange head mutilation, a ghastly barbarity that lost none of its effect by the knowledge that the same fate was lurking silently behind any near-by tree or bush.

The story of Braddock's defeat has been told time and again and no two tellings are alike. Washington was in the thick of it, for he joined the advance troops the day before the battle and wrote afterward that "I luckily escap'd with't a wound tho' I had four Bullets through my Coat and two Horses shot under me." His account is as correct as any.

We were attack'd (very unexpectdly I must own) by abt.300 French and Ind'ns;Our numbers consisted of abt.1300 well arm'd Men, chiefly Regulars, who were immediately struck with such a deadly Panick, that nothing but confusion and disobedience of orders prevail'd amongst them: The Officers in gen'l behav'd with incomparable bravery,for which they greatly suffer'd, there being near 60 kill'd and wound'd. A large proportion out of the number we had! The Virginia Companies behav'd like Men and died like Soldiers; for I believe out of the 3 Companies that were there that day,scarce 30 were left alive: Captn.Peyrouny and all his Officers down to a Corporal were kill'd;Captn.Polson shar'd almost as hard a Fate,for only one of his Escap'd: In short the distardly behaviour of the English Soldiers expos'd all those who were inclin'd to do their duty to almost certain Death; and at length,despight of every effort to the contrary,broke and run as Sheep before the Hounds leav'g the Artillery,Ammunition,Provisions,and,every individual thing we had with us a prey to the Enemy;and when we endeavour'd to rally them in hopes of regaining our invaluable loss,it was with as much success as if we had attempted to have stop'd the wild Bears of the Mountains. The Genl. was wounded behind in the shoulder, and into the Breast,of w'ch he died three days after."⁶

Braddock's two regular aides were wounded soon after the fight commenced so that, as Washington wrote his mother, he "was the only person left to distribute the Genls.orders which I was scarcely able to do,as I was not half recov'd from a violent illness,that confin'd me to my Bed,and a Waggon,for above 10 Days;I am still in a weak and Feeble cond'n;which induces me to halt here [Fort Cumberland] 2 or 3 Days in hopes of recov'g a little strength."⁷ This account fixes Washington's participation in the battle and as both Lieutenant-Colonel Burton and Sir John St. Clair, though wounded, survived, it appears to be something of an exaggeration to give Washington the entire credit for bringing off the troops. What he did was to act the part of an efficient aide-de-camp and, perhaps, issue a few orders on his own responsibility. The rush of the panic-stricken soldiers swept everything before them and that the result was not a complete massacre, strung out along the road from the Monongahela to Wills Creek, is to be attributed to the small force of the French and their returning to Fort Duquesne almost immediately after the English fled the field.

Had there been a vicious pursuit there would have been few survivors.

There is a touch of the real George Washington in the postscript of his letter to his mother. With a mind filled with anxiety and care and a body weak and tired he yet thought of another mother and wrote: "You may acqt Priscilla Mullican that her Son charles is very well having only rec'd a slight w'd in his Foot w'ch will be cur'd with't detrimt. to him,in a very small time."

Among the wild rumors set on foot by this great catastrophe was one of his own death which Washington hastened to dissipate with a bit of sardonic humor which, better than anything else, tells how deeply he had been stirred by the unanticipated defeat. He wrote to John Augustine the same day he wrote his mother: "As I have heard since my arriv'l at this place a circumstantial acct. of my death and dying speech, I take this early opportunity of contradicting both and of assuring you that I now exist and appear in the land of the living." The fact that this rumor included a dying speech is evidence of the prevalence of the dramatic mind in Virginia. Washington was not singular in his partiality for the stage, nor in likening men and women to players. There was another touch of importance in his story of this catastrophe which should be remembered. To John Augustine he attributed his escape to "the miraculous care of Providence, that protected me beyond all human expectation." Thirty years later in revising the text of this letter for his secretary, with the overwhelming experience of the entire Revolutionary War behind him, he analyzed it as "the all powerful dispensatns. of Providence." But even at twenty-three years of age, as he examined his bullet-torn coat, he knew the proper answer to it.

The day he reached Mount Vernon, from which he did not expect to be able to stir for several weeks, he received a remarkably cheering letter from William Fairfax, to which was appended the still more satisfying round-robin postscript from Sally, signed also by another firm friend with whom he had often played cards and a third fair lady to whom he was indebted for more than one dress shirt: "After thanking Heaven," the postscript ran, "for your safe return I must accuse you of great unkindness in refusing us the pleasure of seeing you this night. I do assure you nothing but our being satisfied that our company would be disagreeable should prevent us from trying if our Legs would not carry us to

Mount Virnon this Night, but if you will not come to us tomorrow Morning very early we shall be at Mont Virnon. S. FAIRFAX. ANN SPEARING. ELIZTH. DENT."

This was dated July twenty-sixth. The next day was Sunday and it is amusing to note on that date in Washington's expense account an item of one shilling, three pence for watermelons. Were the Belvoir visitors regaled with watermelons on their visit? If so the jollity of that watermelon feast on the veranda of Mount Vernon may be imagined.

Although Braddock's defeat brought Washington's name before the colonies more importantly than ever before and though the interest of every one was focused upon the dramatic and appalling disaster at the Monongahela, the important fact is the effect upon Washington's character, of his association with a British major-general at a British Army headquarters and the experience gained thereby.

For all of Braddock's blustering wrath there was an honest worth in the man and Washington learned many things of value to himself in the association. His personal expenditures after the campaign show this, for there are to be found therein indications of an awakened fastidiousness, difficult to account for from any other angle. Among these are his fencing lessons under Sergeant Wood, which cost him £1:1:6 as entrance fee, £3:4:6 for three months' instructions and a closing entry which Washington dryly notes as: "By balance never expected £2.5.5." There is no indication of how Fencing Master Wood vanished from the scene, leaving his debt behind him.

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CHAPTER X

COMMAND ON THE VIRGINIA FRONTIER—INDIAN RAIDS AND THE VIRGINIA REGIMENT

AFTER Braddock's defeat the first and immediate need for Virginia was the protection of the frontier from Indian raids, as both the power and the prestige of British arms had vanished. Without waiting for orders Washington, as a district adjutant, sent out a circular to his county-lieutenants in the Northern District calling for musters of the militia on certain specified days when he would be present to inspect them.¹ This was the extent of his authority and powers, but to this extent he was determined that the forces of Virginia should be ready. His letter to his elder half-brother, Augustine Washington, August second, denies that he was dispirited by the defeat, and as Augustine was a member of the House of Burgesses, Adjutant George Washington stated he was "ready and always willing to do my Country any Services that I am capable of," but with vivid recollection of what he might expect from his Honor the Governor, he hastened to add, "but never upon the Terms I have done, having suffer'd much in my private fortune,"² besides impairing one of the best of Constitutions." This idea and the state of his health kept him from visiting Williamsburg while the Burgesses were in session. There was considerable discussion of the steps needed to be taken and it was rumored that Washington was to be made commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces and sent on a new venture to the Ohio. His mother heard this talk and wrote him at once urging him not to risk his life again, and he answered her that he would not go if he could honorably decline; but when his appointment came, he found it to be everything he had contended for. He was commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces with the rank of colonel and with sixteen companies under him. His commission was dated August fourteenth, but with canny economy, Dinwiddie did not permit his pay to begin until September first. The appointment, as far as the Governor was concerned, seems to have been due to the fact that

Braddock, had he lived, would have recommended Washington to the royal favor. This in Dinwiddie's eyes was an accolade and more than justified the commission. It did not, however, confer so great a privilege as exemption from the payment of the Governor's fee of £2:2:9 for the document itself. Although by this commission Washington was made commander-in-chief of all the Virginia forces, it gave him colonial rank only, and Dinwiddie again evaded the important issue which was soon raised by a captain who, holding a commission signed by the King, refused to take orders from Washington.

The newly appointed Commander-in-Chief was not over-sanguine of success, for he saw that conditions were such "that no Man can gain honour by conduct'g our Forces at this time but rather loose in his reputation."

The wagon transport system, such as it was, had been ruined by Braddock's management; the hired teamsters had not been paid their wages and could collect nothing for their horses killed and wagons smashed.³ Seeing such things in the light he did, Washington felt that he would lose "what at present constitutes the chief part of my happiness, i.e. the esteem and notice the Country has been pleased to honour me with." He had written Augustine Washington, previous to his appointment, that he would not think of entering the service again except on such terms "as to prevent my suffrg. (to gain by it, is the least of my expectation)." Yet he did accept the appointment on account of the dire straits to which Virginia was reduced. He wished "it were more in my power than it is to answer the favourable opinion my Friends have conceiv'd of my abilitys, let them not be deceiv'd, I am unequal to the Task, and do assure you it requires more experience than I am master of to conduct an affair of the importance that this has now arisen to."⁴

Twenty years later General George Washington was to make practically this same statement before the Continental Congress.

One of the first things he attended to after his arrival at Fort Cumberland was to establish the uniform of the officers of the Virginia regiment as a blue coat, cuffed and faced with scarlet and trimmed with silver; blue breeches and a silver laced hat, "if to be had."

There was an amazing need of attention to the smallest military detail in all this activity. Food, clothing, ammunition and arms; shoes, hats and

belts not only had to be provided for but their distribution, transportation and receipt had to be devised by him. The inhabitants needed powder and shot. Could he give it to them? Not without permission from a dour Governor in far-off Williamsburg. And how much could be spared from his scanty store? The commissary and quartermaster were little more than names and matters that seldom come before a commanding officer to-day had to be attended to by Washington. Even the elementary sanitation of the camp was a part of his worry. Many of Washington's orders and directions were to correct evils that captains of companies should never have permitted to occur. It was a mass of overwhelming detail; but the lessons taught him and the experience gained were of immense value to Washington and to the nation during the Revolutionary War.

There were orders to prevent the abuse of the soldier's firelock, to prevent drunkenness and profanity; rolls had to be called over three times a day to discover soldiers absent without leave or who had deserted, and there was continual dinning on the necessity of target practise.

After matters were in some sort of shape at the fort, the Commander-in-Chief set off on a tour of inspection of the chain of frontier posts from Cumberland to Fort Dinwiddie, in Augusta County. For nearly three hundred miles he rode, with only his aide, Captain George Mercer, along the Indian path to the west of the Devil's Back Bone Mountains, risking bullet and arrow in every mile and well aware of it. Leaving contingent orders along the line for handling Indian raids, he crossed into the Shenandoah and rode down the valley, through Staunton, crossed the Blue Ridge into Culpeper and was back in Winchester by the middle of October, to be met with the alarming news that the Indians had at last started their long expected raids upon the frontier.

He sent out a call for the militia and notified every officer to speed up recruiting for the regiment. There was no ammunition, no horses available and little or no clothing for the troops. A frontier situation where an Indian raid can not be repulsed or a counter-raid started, for want of powder and clothing was not one to inspire enthusiasm. Washington appointed Christopher Gist to raise a company and urged him to persuade all the friendly Indians he could to bring their families into Winchester to live with the English, hoping he could thereby obtain some good Indian scouts. He sent out as many scouting parties as he could gather and arm

and then sat himself down to report the situation to his Honor the Governor. Winchester was in the greatest confusion, "the back Inhabitants flocking in, and those of the Town removing out" but he tried to stop this.⁵

The utmost exertion could not assemble more than two dozen men to march out against the raiding savages. Men preferred staying with their families and dying with them, if need be, to marching off into the woods under military command to search for a wily foe and return perhaps, to find their loved ones murdered and scalped during their absence. It was panic and panic can not be reasoned with. The back settlers, who had flocked to Winchester for protection, refused to give up their horses and wagons and threatened to blow out Washington's brains when he tried to impress them.⁶ The lack of a military law in Virginia interfered with action in a crisis and under the strain the soldiers of the Virginia regiment became insolent and dilatory in obeying orders. There was no answer to Washington's logic that a young, inexperienced frontier country could not get along without strict militia regulations when an old, established and experienced nation like Great Britain found them necessary; but neither the legislators, nor the Governor of Virginia bestirred themselves to establish such regulations.

Next, panic-stricken refugees rushed into Winchester with word that the Indians were within four miles of the town and that musket-shots and the shrieks of the victims were plainly heard. Washington collected all the men he could, about forty, and marched at once for the scene of the massacre, only to discover that the bloodthirsty savages were two or three drunken soldiers, shouting, roaring and firing their pistols. These he dragged back to Winchester and flung into the guard-house.

There had actually been an Indian raid many miles from Winchester and some seventy whites had fallen victims to savage fury; but the raiders had retreated, leaving only a great panic throughout the frontier, where it was currently reported that Winchester was in flames and the Shenandoah abandoned.

Washington issued a proclamation giving the true facts of the matter and urging the people to return to their farms and save their crops, but without much result. He urged Dinwiddie to take steps to cement the friendship of the Indians well disposed toward the English and almost

diagrammed the method by which this might be accomplished, but he could have spared himself the trouble. And on top of all the difficulties in raising troops, feeding, clothing and equipping them, he was driven almost frantic by the indolence of most of his officers, who seemed to have but slight understanding of their responsibilities. Desertion was an ever-present evil, but the men could hardly be blamed for this as they were ill-fed, ill-clothed and ill-paid. Not only that, but infrequently paid and when they did get their money, it was in large bills and, as there was very little change to be had on the frontier, gambling soon concentrated all the money in the hands of a few.

There are unexpected glimpses of the human George Washington through all this strain and confusion. His cash accounts give us most of these. He found some relaxation in his fencing lessons under Sergeant Wood and it is not hard to imagine the amused smile with which he entered the loan of fifteen shillings to William Colston, to defray that individual's wedding-night expenses. If Washington's purse was always open to the calls of his friends, neither was it closed to the pleas of charity. "By Cash gave a Man who had his House Burnt £1" is eloquent of a practical sympathy and the largesse of one pound distributed to a small band of strolling players at Fort Cumberland shows how much he thought these unexpected Thespians had cheered the winter gloom. He gave another pound to the drummer who assisted the players.

Whipping and imprisonment proved no deterrent to desertions, and faced with the disagreeable alternative of accepting desertion or stopping it, Washington was forced to the distasteful length of hanging a few of the worst offenders (for some of the men deserted more than once). The inhabitants made common cause with the soldiery and aided deserters in every possible way. This from the fact that the rewards for informing on, or capturing, the men were practically uncollectible except at great trouble, delay and expense. Helping deserters get away was a method of the inhabitants for "getting even" for the times they had given deserters up and not been paid according to the law in the matter. A curious arrangement of Governor Dinwiddie's was that when a soldier died, he was to be continued on the pay-roll for twenty-eight days thereafter "to pay for his coffin." In important ways Dinwiddie made difficult the work of defending the Virginia frontier. Fort Cumberland at Wills Creek was

a Maryland work and there was a one-time rumor that Governor Sharpe would command it in person. As between his Virginia subjects and a royal governor colleague in an adjoining state, the royal Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia could make but one decision. Fort Cumberland became an important post in his eyes and the more Washington, the Virginia Colonel, argued against it as a Virginia post, the more Dinwiddie's stubbornness insisted on its value. Its geographical position was such that it afforded little protection to the Virginia inhabitants and when Maryland left its garrisoning to Virginia it became an added strain on men, money and supplies to the Old Dominion. A bad spot, a grave danger zone, lay between Fort Cumberland and Fort Loudoun, at Winchester in the Shenandoah, which was not lessened in any way by keeping a detachment of the Virginia regiment as a garrison for the Maryland fort. Maryland's contribution to the garrison strength was an independent company under the command of Captain John Dagworthy who held his commission direct from the King (a second Captain Mackay) and so held himself superior to all colonial commissions including Colonel Washington's. Governor Sharpe declined to interfere; he was at least not averse to having a Maryland officer at Fort Cumberland the equal of the Virginia officer there, while Virginia stood the entire expense of garrison. Dinwiddie either feared to decide against a royal commission or was willing to have a curb applied to "Mr. Washington," whose efforts to bring the Virginia regiment into a state of efficiency could not be other than irritating to a governor who was largely responsible for its condition of inefficiency. At any rate his attitude in this Dagworthy controversy was as shuffling as it had been in the case of Mackay. He was ready enough to criticize and rebuke Washington whenever difficulties arose, regardless of the fact that many of those difficulties were the results of his own indecision. Forced finally to take a stand in the matter, his solution, in 1756, was as absurd as his decision in 1754, which had compelled Washington's resignation. He wrote to Governor Shirley, proposing that the Virginia officers above the rank of captain be given brevets, though how this could have overridden the rank claim of a royal commission only a Dinwiddie intelligence could comprehend, and this intelligence did not see that a simple way out of the difficulty was to withdraw the Virginia troops from the Maryland fort. Shirley, as commander-in-chief in America, did not

bother to reply to this brevet suggestion, and Washington finally obtained Dinwiddie's permission to go to Boston and lay the matter personally before him; otherwise, Washington wrote Dinwiddie, "I am determined to resign a commission which you were generously pleased to offer me (and for which I shall always retain a grateful sense of the favor) rather than submit to the command of a person, who I think, has not such superlative merit as to balance the inequality of rank."⁷

Before he set out on the five-hundred-mile horseback ride, Washington put the frontier in the best state of defense he could. He built forts on Patterson's Creek and ordered the building of two more on the South Branch of the Potomac, which would guard the most frequented and more easily traveled paths from the Ohio to the Virginia settlements.

There was small chance of an Indian foray upon the settlements in the depths of winter and Washington set out for Boston the beginning of February and was back in Winchester the first week of April. His personal expense account, which is about the only record existent of this long journey, barring a few newspaper notices of his arrival and departure from Philadelphia and New York, give glimpses of the four riders (Colonel George Washington, his aide, Captain George Mercer, and two servants, John Alton and Thomas Bishop) as they trotted over the high-road or dismounted at inn doors. The expenditures show dealings with tailors, hatters, jewelers and saddlers; of social diversions in New York among which is the expense item of escorting the ladies of the Beverley Robinson family to the marvelous "Microcosm."

Beverley was the son of Speaker John Robinson, of the Virginia House of Burgesses. Mary Philipse⁸ of Philipse Manor, was Beverley's sister-in-law and, doubtless, one of the party who may have been willing to go with the young Virginia Colonel on one of his two visits to the elaborate mechanism called the world in miniature, built in the form of a Roman temple. Washington's decided interest in mechanics was a larger factor, it is to be feared, in his visits to the Microcosm (two within three days), than his gallantry in showing attention to his New York hostess and her friends. His attendance at the levee, or "rout" of Mrs. Baron, between the visits to the Microcosm, was probably the more real social diversion, for it may be questioned if the Robinson ladies were really thrilled at repeating their visit to the mechanical wonder and did not go the second

time as a polite duty. But that the Virginia Colonel enjoyed his visits there can be little doubt. He lingered ten days, which was a tribute to Robinson's hospitality, though some of this time may be accounted for in the purchase of three riding mares, a transaction which, in those days, was not completed with the ease and speed of automobile purchasing to-day. One of these mares was obtained from Oliver DeLancey, who, with his loyalist horsemen later, was to give Washington's Continental infantry some anxious moments in Westchester County.

Boston was reached at last and a new uniform, hat and gloves were purchased for the audience with Governor-General Shirley. At the same time he laid out some one hundred and two pounds, seventeen shillings and three pence for clothing and ninety-four pounds in silver lace to take back to Virginia for the uniforms of the Virginia officers. Washington's visit was well-timed and the matter of rank on the Virginia frontier was well presented. Shirley was not Dinwiddie and he handed Colonel Washington a written decision giving him rank and authority over Captain Dagworthy, ending it "and, in case it should happen, that Colonel Washington and Captain Dagworthy should join at Fort Cumberland, it is my order that Colonel Washington shall take the command."⁹

The return trip from Boston to Williamsburg was made in less than three weeks. At Philadelphia Washington attended the exclusive Assembly Ball and purchased a tent and marquee; but it seems an incomprehensible oversight that none of the raconteurs of the Mary Philipse romance have claimed that he fell in love with one of the belles of the Quaker City, several of whom were doubtless as rich and beautiful as the much discussed Miss Philipse of New York.

By the time the Colonel reached Winchester conditions on the frontier were going from bad to worse; Indian raids were beginning and the nervousness and fright of the inhabitants was increasing.

Long before this Washington had given up writing fully of matters to Governor Dinwiddie as a hopeless waste of time. Instead he wrote at length to the Speaker of the House and, through that channel, urged his recommendations. The Blue Ridge, he feared, would soon become the frontier, unless the Virginia regiment could be strongly reenforced and properly equipped. The Indians "were like wolves." They acted in defiance of small parties of troops but "dexterously avoid the larger."¹⁰

"Indians," he urged, "are only match for Indians; without these we shall ever fight upon unequal terms." So he pleaded for the employment of friendly Indians and that the inhabitants should be made to assemble together in townships in event of a general Indian war, which would deprive the war-parties of the cattle and food they were in the habit of getting by raids. In a letter to the Governor of Pennsylvania, Washington urged a union of the colonies (meaning Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania) to combat most effectively an Indian frontier war. The Virginia Burgesses voted an appropriation of twenty thousand pounds but neither Maryland nor Pennsylvania exerted themselves. The difficulty of raising men in Virginia induced Washington to recommend drafting, but at the same time he urged that selection be used to obtain the right kind of experienced woodsmen in the draft.

The disinclination of the inhabitants to enlist in the service was due to several things. First, the frontier habit of mind did not easily grasp the advantages of cooperative action under rules and regulations. Second, the recollection of the experiences under Braddock was yet too fresh, and third, the feeling of every man was that when trouble came he wanted to be with his family and not depend upon others to protect it. The Virginia regiment, despite numerous desertions and small numbers, was performing valiantly in guarding the frontier, and although the inhabitants criticized freely and even jeered at the troops, it was to the Virginia regiment they appealed for help when the Indian raids began. Split up into small detachments of from ten to a score, the troops were distributed along the wall of the Alleghenies, where they were continually ranging, scouting and pursuing small bodies of Indians, occasionally cornering the savages and shooting it out with them. It was hard, dangerous and discouraging work. "Five hundred Indians have it more in their power to annoy the Inhabitants than ten times their number of Regulars. . . . Their cunning and craft is not to be equalled . . . they prowl about like wolves; and like them, do their mischief by stealth."¹¹

Some of the Virginia officers were active and efficient and some of them, unfortunately, were not the frontier heroes they might have been. The rank and file were generally pretty good men when properly led and although Washington raged at their desertions, hung a few of the worst offenders and whipped others for this and minor crimes of thievery and

drunkenness, his real appreciation of the men is to be found in the many entries in his cash accounts after he resigned from the service. "To an old soldier"; "To a wounded Soldier" and "To a Virginia Soldier." The number of shillings and pence following is sufficient to show that a sure approach to Washington's heart was the claim to have served in the Virginia regiment. It was a hard life and they were hard men. The old sea apothegm surely fitted that regiment: "To work hard, live hard, die hard and go to hell afterward is damn hard."

And in addition to the hardships in the field the regiment had to stand for harsh criticism from people comfortably far away from the tomahawk and scalping knife. Charges were made in the Legislature that Washington's troops were dissolute drunkards, guilty of scandalous immoralities, and the highly shocked Virginia Governor wrote to Washington demanding a report. This report,¹² when it came, recited the Colonel's orders, long since and continuously given, against all licentious conduct. It called attention to the fact that persuasion, threats and the cat-o'-nine-tails lash had been used lavishly, though there was doubt of the legal authority for this last. Something of a climax came in an anonymous newspaper attack on the Virginia regiment, printed in the *Virginia Gazette*, over the signature of "Centinel" which accused the regiment of inefficiency, dissipation and refusing to go into the woods to meet the Indians. "Centinel" seems to have been nothing more than an over-active, eighteenth-century muckraker. He had already delivered himself of nine furious criticisms of various governmental weaknesses and, though Number X was directed against the Virginia regiment, his succeeding blasts were against other phases of the state machine.¹³

The officers of the regiment answered the "Centinel's" attacks by the decidedly human rejoinder that they would resign from the service in six weeks, which time was given to supply men in their places, unless they received ample satisfaction for the dastardly and groundless assertions. In addition to this blast from the officers, Washington wrote a refutation and sent it to Williamsburg to his brother, together with the money necessary to have it printed, but his friends thought it wisest to let the matter drop, as it would only harm the regiment more and aid the subscription campaign of the *Gazette*. The "Centinel's" attack dampened the spirits of the regiment and cast an added gloom over the frontier. The Governor as-

sumed the attitude of a critic and though Washington laid a heavy hand of discipline upon his soldiers, put several in irons, flogged others and threatened a few with death by means of court martial, he informed Dinwiddie that it was quite useless to send on the proceedings of the trials as there was no law by which this last punishment could be inflicted. This did not please the Governor any more than unpalatable truth ever does. The Colonel held his temper in fine restraint and further informed the Governor that he could not pretend to say how far his orders had failed to produce the required results, in view of the fact that the soldiers were well aware that he really had no warrant in law for his disciplinary punishments; but the issuing of his orders was, nevertheless, he wrote, "a point which does, in my opinion, merit some scrutiny, before it meets with a final condemnation. . . . I also know, that the unhappy difference about the command, which has kept me from Fort Cumberland, has consequently prevented me from *enforcing* the orders which I never failed to *send*." As Dinwiddie was responsible for the unhappy difference about the command, this was a fair retort, but the Governor could not be expected to admit it. To Speaker Robinson, of the Burgesses, Washington was less restrained and lashed out in a man-to-man talk, to ask the blunt question whether Captain Dagworthy, who was allowed by Dinwiddie to claim the command at Fort Cumberland and who declined to take orders from Washington, should not be held responsible for the disorders.

But the Indian raids continued and the regiment not only had to protect the inhabitants but found itself forced to feed them as well. The result was that both troops and inhabitants were sometimes compelled to withdraw from the frontier in a state of starvation. Yet for all its inability to beat back the Indians, the First Virginia Regiment had the proud record of having so protected the frontier that Virginia had less than half the number of people killed by Indian raids than the other provinces had suffered during the same period.¹⁴ This protection had been purchased at the cost of the death of one-third of the regiment, whose detachments had had twenty fights with the savages, which was at the rate of two encounters a month. Two Indian fights in the forest every month was certainly active service for any organization and Washington's bitterness welled up against the chimney-corner politicians who expected the impossible from his harassed troops. Again he considered resigning and would have done

so but for the fact that it was a time of imminent danger. The woods were alive with Indians and there was only a barrel or two of powder to be found in all Winchester. In one of the few caustic letters he permitted himself to write to the Governor at the time, he endeavored to make Dinwiddie understand the real conditions. "I would be a willing offering to savage fury, and die by inches to save a people!" he wrote, April 22, 1756. "I see their situation, know their danger, and participate in their sufferings, without having it in my power to give them further relief, than uncertain promises." . . . If the danger were not so imminent, he said, he would resign, without hesitating a moment, "a command which I never expect to reap either honor or benefit from; but, on the contrary, have almost an absolute certainty of incurring displeasure below"—meaning Dinwiddie's—"while the murder of poor innocent babes and helpless families may be laid to my account here!"

Dinwiddie immediately ordered out one-half of the militia of the ten upper counties, but neglected to arrange the rather important matter of how they were to be fed.¹⁵ Washington could only write wearily back: "The want of due direction in a matter of this nature causes great inconvenience." He called a council of his officers which advised that the militia be distributed among the northern posts and stockades along Patterson's Creek, Cacapehon and the South Branch of the Potomac. The inhabitants were deserting their farms and flying eastward in groups of fifty or more, and to Washington, whose mind dwelt so frequently upon the settlement of the western country, everything had too melancholy an appearance to communicate.

The Legislature authorized the increase of the regiment to fifteen hundred men, when two thousand would not have been enough. It insisted on building a chain of forts down the western frontier, though Washington's plain logic pointed out the fallacy of the scheme. He exhibited its weakness in a clear light, but the matter was decided and he dropped his objections and only urged that a strong fort be erected at Winchester.

Washington's understanding and experience in the protection of the frontier had brought him to see the one principle upon which success could be obtained, and that was an aggressive offensive. Defensive measures, he urged, were useless. They were ineffective, heavily expensive and they did not defend. Fort Duquesne, he declared again and again,

was the seat of Virginia's frontier troubles; take that and the French would have to retire so far back as to put all the difficulty and expense of raiding the Virginia frontier upon their shoulders, instead of allowing them to put it, as it then was, upon Virginia. Deprived of French support the Indians would keep more quiet. It was all so simple, as Washington saw it, that he was driven nearly frantic by the contrary course of the government.

CHAPTER XI

GOVERNORS DINWIDDIE AND LOUDOUN

IN APRIL, 1756, the panic had so spread that the Blue Ridge had become the western frontier of Virginia. Washington worked hard to better conditions. He had long since learned to discount wild stories of disaster and to investigate rumors before crediting them. By the end of May he felt justified in issuing a public notice to the inhabitants that the French and Indians had ceased their raids (it is probable that the news of Dinwiddie's ordering out the militia had some influence on the raiders), and urged the inhabitants to return to their farms under the protection of these additional militia guards. The unfortunate part of the matter was that the inhabitants feared and disliked the militia almost as much as they did the Indians. Indeed these fair-weather soldiers, being under no strict regulation, inflicted nearly as much damage, if killing and burning is excepted, as the savages, so that Washington's assurance did not inspire any great amount of confidence. There was only one Indian raid made after this notice was issued and the militia were discharged at the end of the harvest season.

War was formally declared by England against France in May, 1756, and the fact was announced to the regiment in August. The Earl of Loudoun was appointed governor of Virginia and commander-in-chief in America, and the colony waited hopefully for his plan of operations. Washington's orders show that the regiment was spruced up as much as possible to make a good showing against the Earl's arrival, and one more letter was written to Dinwiddie urging the withdrawal of the Virginia detachment from Fort Cumberland, but the Governor irritably refused even to consider it. Washington then made a hasty tour of the chain of frontier forts (which carried him down to within a few miles of the North Carolina line), so as to be able to answer all possible questions that might be asked by Lord Loudoun, and he forwarded a report as a matter of duty to Dinwiddie, describing the condition of the frontier defenses.

Dinwiddie's irritation with Washington seems to have increased in exact proportion as Lord Loudoun neared Virginia, so that when, in the midst of a letter dealing with many other things, Washington called attention to his former request for the appointment of a chaplain for the regiment, the Governor rebuked him by calling attention to the fact that the candidate should forward his qualifications and the Bishop's letter of license to the Commissary, the President of William and Mary. Then he complained that Washington had not offered any name for this red tape to be wound around, entirely forgetting that Washington's request for the chaplain left the entire matter in his, Dinwiddie's, hands. To his further complaint that Washington did not report his tour of the frontier forts fully enough, the Colonel merely replied that he "was sorry to find that this and my best endeavours of late meet with unfavourable constructions." All this was very good training for the acid test that General George Washington was to undergo from the Continental Congress a quarter of a century later; but it was very wearing to the military ardor which still burned in Washington's breast with "zeal to serve my country, steady attachment to her interests, the *honor* of arms and crying grievances she is struggling under."¹

One of the causes of Dinwiddie's dislike of Washington was the latter's opposition to the Governor's plan of defensive frontier warfare and insistence upon the offensive. Then in December of 1756 (after Washington had finally succeeded by unremitting, herculean effort in organizing the frontier defense) came the final demoralizing order from Dinwiddie to withdraw all the garrisons from the chain of forts and send a detachment of the regiment to Fort Cumberland, keeping only one hundred men at Fort Loudoun. Perhaps Washington had heard of the paralytic stroke suffered by Dinwiddie and therefore answered him gently that the troops were being withdrawn as he had ordered and that "the provisions purchased for the support of these forts, and now lying in bulk, will be wasted and destroyed, notwithstanding I have given directions to the assistant commissary on the Branch, and to Waggener's company to use their utmost diligence in collecting the whole, and securing it." Washington was at a loss to understand the meaning of such orders, as to call in all the troops from the chain of forts, to send one hundred to Cumberland and keep one hundred at Fort Loudoun would leave one hundred on

Washington's hands for which he had no orders. The Colonel's stationing of detachments along the frontier gave satisfaction to the inhabitants and the situation was improving when this order from Dinwiddie disrupted the entire frontier defense. It was enough to irritate any one and Washington expressed his feeling to Speaker Robinson in plain words: "All my sincerest endeavours for the service of my country perverted to the worst purposes. My orders are dark, doubtful, and uncertain; *to-day approved, to-morrow condemned*. Left to act and proceed at hazard, accountable for the consequence, and blamed without the benefit of defence!" But he determined to wait the arrival of Lord Loudoun and looked forward to his coming as a beginning of better things. Unfortunately, Dinwiddie forestalled Washington even here, and in reporting his own administration of affairs in Virginia, he urged upon Loudoun the importance of Fort Cumberland and obtained his lordship's positive order that the fort must be maintained at all costs. It was also fairly inferential that Dinwiddie had poisoned Loudoun's mind against Washington as the Earl was unjustifiably sharp in his criticism of some of Washington's suggestions. This prejudice created and fostered by the type of mind unable to distinguish between its own importance and the good of a people for whom it was officially responsible, was to create difficulties in the so-called Forbes campaign that nearly defeated it.

The arrival of Lord Loudoun in America had furnished a hope that Virginia might, through him, succeed in the capture of Fort Duquesne. But the Earl did not, as expected, come to Virginia, and as soon as it became evident that he would not, Colonel Washington, taking advantage of the fact that, in addition to being commander-in-chief in America the Earl was also governor of Virginia, sent him a report of the military situation in the colony, which was a vivid picture of affairs from the beginning of hostilities in 1754 and a strong argument for an expedition against Fort Duquesne. This, the Earl's secretary wrote, made a good impression, and when Loudoun called a council of the Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina to meet in Philadelphia, the Virginia Colonel, encouraged by the reception accorded his report, applied to Dinwiddie for permission to visit Philadelphia at this time. The dour old Governor answered that he could not "conceive what service you can be of in going there, as the plan concerted will in course

be communicated to you and the other officers. However, as you seem so earnest to go, I now give you leave."²

But if Dinwiddie could not conceive of any purpose, Washington was quite clear in his own mind about it. He went to plead the cause of the Virginia regiment, to explain his difficulties of command on the Virginia frontier and lastly, to urge his own advancement in the military line. In all three of these points he failed to achieve results. Loudoun, under instructions from home, decided upon a campaign in the north and Washington returned to Virginia. But he seems to have had a pleasant time in Philadelphia. He attended the Assembly balls three times during the month he was there and lost thirty shillings at cards. He invested 52/6d. in tickets for a lottery for the college and academy of Philadelphia, for lotteries in a good cause held a decided fascination for George Washington, though it did not require a lottery to obtain from him a five-pound subscription toward erecting a market-house in Fredericksburg, on his return from Philadelphia, in January, 1757. He submitted to the ministrations of the barber several times while in the Quaker City and his expense accounts show how careful he must have been in having his hair trimmed and dressed.³ Thrice he succumbed to the pleas of Philadelphia beggars as he went the round of visiting among his friends in the city; he subscribed to printer James Chattin's proposal to print a translation of the French Government's *Memoire of Affairs in America from 1749 to 1756*. This included Washington's own journal which the French had found among the discarded baggage of the English at Fort Necessity. Of this journal, as published by the French, Washington wrote that it was "very incorrect and nonsensical" with many things therein "egregiously miscalled." Washington never quite conquered the English language and in following the flowery style of his time was not always sensitive to the exact shade of the meaning of words. In his early years, he used good American slang which had a healthy tang to it, for he wrote, at different times, that "the soldiers think themselves *bubbled*"; that the "Indians think it all *hum*" and that "unless more money is sent we shall all be in the *suds* again."

The visit to Philadelphia while the Governors were there was not entirely a loss, as he carried back to Virginia orders from Lord Loudoun that the detachment from the Virginia regiment was to be withdrawn

from Fort Cumberland. This was a gain but Dinwiddie, as usual, failed to give directions as to the provisions and other supplies which Virginia had laid up in the fort with such labor and expense, and the Marylanders promptly laid claim to them as the King's stores and therefore as much theirs as Virginia's. Washington wrote for directions, but Dinwiddie ignored him. "I am convinced," Washington wrote to Speaker Robinson, "that it would be a pleasure to the Governor to hear that I was involved in trouble however undeservedly, such are his dispositions toward me."*

CHAPTER XII

INDIANS—THE FRONTIER—DINWIDDIE'S RETIREMENT

COLONEL JOHN STANWIX was appointed by Lord Loudoun to command the middle and southern departments, into which the colonies were divided for the war, and Dinwiddie wrote Washington that he should consider himself under Stanwix's orders; then, the doughty Governor continued, precisely as before, to require reports and returns from Washington, to issue orders and directions, which did not always agree with those from Stanwix and to continue his blundering management of affairs. This, of course, complicated matters and sometimes doubled Washington's work.

If anything were needed to justify Washington's opposition to a divided command at Fort Cumberland and a junior officer who refused to obey his orders, it appeared soon after the withdrawal of the Virginia troops from that fort. Captain Dagworthy was then left in sole command and immediately became panic-stricken at a report brought in by some friendly Cherokee Indians, which he interpreted as news of a large force of French and Indians advancing from Fort Duquesne with artillery and all necessary equipment. He sent frantic messages for help in all directions, but his hysterical statements convinced Washington that the alarm was false, as the story contradicted itself. Washington's judgment proved right. Dagworthy did not understand Indian ways of expressing themselves and having no interpreters worthy of the name he entirely misconstrued a report which belonged in the category of a daily check on the French movements, as news of a major operation. Washington, being human, must have felt a humorous satisfaction in this confirmatory evidence of the justice of his attitude toward Dagworthy. He contented himself with the sage remark that "it was a surprising mistake for an Officer (in the least degree acquainted with the service) to make." In the light of Dagworthy's haughty claim to superiority that parenthesis contains a penetrating sting. "I had an opportunity," Washington wrote, "of exam-

ining the same Indians afterwards, and to me they denied having given such an account.”¹

The troops at Winchester were short of clothing and arms, with no great amount of powder or food supplies, and Washington wrote to the Speaker: “We are greatly distressed for want of arms for the Draughts (that is new recruits just coming in). I have mentioned this to the Governor; but on this head, as on most others, he is silent.”

It seemed to be Dinwiddie’s normal procedure to ignore important things and to let loose a blast of criticism on some minor or imagined failure of Washington. He took the Colonel sharply to task for the number of batmen (servants) allowed the officers and Washington immediately obtained from Colonel Stanwix an official statement of how this matter was handled by the British regulars. This he sent to Dinwiddie to explain the practise in the Virginia regiment and added: “As your Honor was pleased to make the Regulars a precedent for reducing our Bat-men; we hope you will also do it for establishing an allowance for the expense of keeping them, and for affording the other allowance of Waggon &c. to transport the Officers Baggage and necessaries (which hitherto has always been done at their own private cost).” A fair retort but quite unappreciated by Dinwiddie.

Desertions still plagued the regiment. The new recruits received their clothing, collected their bounty-money and promptly vanished the next night (in one instance, out of four hundred recruits, one hundred and fourteen deserted). Washington was so wrought up over the prevalence of this practise that he requested blank warrants from Dinwiddie for convening courts martial with the power of inflicting the death penalty, and he wrote that he was determined “if I can be justified in the proceeding, to hang two or three, as an example.”² For this he erected a gallows forty feet high which terrified the recruits exceedingly. On this gruesome gibbet he hung two men, one of whom had deserted twice and the other “was accounted one of the greatest villains on the continent.” Washington’s feelings revolted at this extreme and when Dinwiddie left the decision in the case of the rest of the guilty to him, the Colonel pardoned them “since I find examples of so little weight, and since these poor unhappy criminals have undergone no small pain of body and mind, in a dark room, closely ironed.”³

As soon as the Virginia troops were withdrawn from Fort Cumberland, Washington promptly regarrisoned the chain of forts, from which they had been taken by order of Dinwiddie and his Council. Washington's orders and instructions to the detachments of the regiment stationed along the frontier show the tremendous amount of detail with which he had to contend. The forts ordered built by the House of Burgesses were designed by Washington, the dimensions established and the actual plans drawn and specifications written out by him. The commissaries had to be urged by him and directed as to what and where and when to purchase food supplies; even the officers in command of the detachments had to be shown how to make returns; the recruiting service had to be supervised, the paymasters had to be directed in some of their duties; clothing had to be provided, camp utensils seen to, arms obtained and repaired.

His efforts to keep the soldiers within the bounds of decency are shown by his frequent orders against "licentious swearing and all other unbecoming irregularities." Washington's pride in the regiment and his struggle to round it into shape to take part in the campaign is shown in his general instructions to all his captains, July 29, 1757: "Discipline," he wrote, "is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak, and esteem to all; and may, in a peculiar manner to us, who are in the way to be joined to Regulars in a very short time, and of distinguishing thro this means, from other Provincials."

In addition to the work of whipping the Virginia regiment into shape, the trouble of handling and holding the friendship of those Indian tribes who adhered to the British had demanded much of Washington's time and attention. In reply to his urgent calls for directions and authority necessary to handle the Indian matters which daily pressed upon him, Governor Dinwiddie petulantly took all Indian affairs out of Washington's hands and by some extraordinary mental process arrived at the conclusion that his suppression of the Virginia Commander-in-Chief's management suppressed the Indian difficulties at the same time. Washington's suggestion that Christopher Gist be appointed to settle all Indian expense accounts drew from Dinwiddie a rebuke and a charge that he was seeking to increase the number of colony employees. This was too much for Washington to accept with calmness and he wrote to the Governor that it was "evident, from a variety of circumstances and especially

from the change in your Honor's conduct towards me that some person, as well inclined to detract, but better skilled in the art of detraction than the author of the above stupid scandal, has made free with my character."⁴

He asked for the facts of the matter, and Dinwiddie, with characteristic inability to meet a situation fairly, replied that "he would gladly hope there is no truth in it" after which indefinite generality he shifted his ground and accused Washington of ingratitude, which was his last display of condescension as a royal governor toward a colonial officer, though the difficulties under which Washington labored through Dinwiddie's orders continued to the very end of the Governor's administration. On October 5, 1757, he was forced to write again to Dinwiddie about the recruiting: "I am afraid the recruiting one hundred men will be found a very difficult task. I am quite at a loss how to act, as you did not inform me upon what terms they are to be levied and supported, what bounty money to allow, what pay to engage the officers and men, how clothed and supported, what the officers pay and what kind of commissions they are to have," and he bluntly added: "If they are to have the same bounty, allowed by the Assembly for recruits, I shall need money for that purpose."

After taking the Indian affairs out of Washington's hands, Dinwiddie appointed a thick-headed individual as Indian agent, who knew next to nothing of Indian nature and whose handling made a bad situation worse. The Indians knew Washington as the commanding officer, the head man, and when the Indian agent insulted and outraged them they took their complaints to Washington. Without authority, he was forced at times to interfere to prevent these friendly Indians from turning into foes. When he succeeded, Dinwiddie merely said that he was only doing his duty; when he failed, the failure was due to the fact that he meddled in affairs in which he had no authority. When the Governor finally left Virginia for England there was slight sorrow felt in the colony.⁵

The continuous strain and hard work proved too much for Washington and he was seized with so violent a dysentery that he left the frontier and hastened to Mount Vernon. It was April before he was able to return to his command and by then preparations for a campaign in Virginia in cooperation with the northern movement against the French were gathering speed. Washington's knowledge of human nature and his former experience with the powers that managed affairs in America led to his

request of Colonel John Stanwix to mention him to General Forbes, who had charge of the middle colonies. With canny understanding he urged a speedy campaign and gave some sage advice as to the handling of the Indian allies so that Stanwix might very easily have forwarded the letter to Forbes as the best method of complying with Washington's request. He asked a similar favor of Colonel Thomas Gage, whom he informed that he had "entirely laid aside all hopes of preferment in the Military line, and being induced to serve this campaign from abstract motives, purely laudable. I only wish to be distinguished in some measure from the general run of provincial Officers, as I understand there will be a motley herd of us." These "abstract motives purely laudable" are not difficult to understand. His frustrated military ambition had become merely the feeling of the young officer who, though he had made up his mind to leave the service, did not wish to do so until he had gained a victory over the enemy who had twice defeated him.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FORBES EXPEDITION—SALLY CARY FAIRFAX

THE Forbes expedition against Fort Duquesne, one of the important moves planned by Pitt against the French in America, did not arouse much enthusiasm in Virginia. The memory of the Braddock fiasco was too vivid and when the friendly Indians, who had again come out of the woods to help in this new enterprise, found day after day slipping by without the arrival of General Forbes or the British regulars, they became increasingly difficult to retain.

Washington's confidence seems not to have been shared by the inhabitants, but he was too busy trying to round the Virginia regiment into presentable shape to give much heed to a lukewarmness to which he had grown accustomed. "It gave me real pleasure," he wrote to Sir John St. Clair, April 27, 1758, "to hear you say, that my company was desired by the General, Sr. John and Major Halkett: I shall think myself quite happy, if I shall be able to return the good opinion they seem to entertain of me: for I have long despaired of any other reward for my Services, than the satisfaction arising from a consciousness of doing my Duty, and from the Esteem of my Friends." He felt obliged to apologize for the shabby appearance of his beloved regiment for he recalled the effect it had produced upon Braddock. He tried to put his men into green or white leggings to improve the uniformity of their appearance; but with knowledge born of experience he instructed the commissary that if green or white could not be obtained "then get any other colour." He sent all the way to Philadelphia to obtain these leggings, an instance of the supply problem difficult to appreciate to-day.

Under directions from Sir John St. Clair, who was the commissary general of the expedition, Brigadier Washington¹ went to Williamsburg and presented to President John Blair a clear state of the situation and of the things needing prompt attention. He drew up a written report in twelve

numbered paragraphs which pictured the jumble into which matters had evolved and which showed clearly that the Virginia organization had collapsed for want of support from Williamsburg. There was a lack of supplies, of clothing, of arms; difference in pay and lack of all of it; differences in terms of service; orders to recruit but no recruiting money as established by law, and no provision of any kind made for the Indians who were disgruntled to the point of returning home because they received no presents, food or assistance. It was a bad tangle of loose ends that Dinwiddie left behind him when he sailed for England in January, 1758. Washington's own orders to the detachments and various company commanders vividly present his efforts to protect the frontier with the newly organized Second Virginia Regiment, to concentrate the First and march it to the assistance of General Forbes. Properly to station men along a three-hundred-mile frontier, with adequate orders to meet all contingencies of Indian surprise attacks; to arrange for food and supplies in a country lacking in both and lacking too in wagons and pack-horses; gradually to shift his available force so as to cooperate with the British regulars in Pennsylvania without alarming the outlying Virginia settlers or permitting a hint of such movement getting to the French, were not light tasks. The value of the friendly Cherokees as scouts to offset the French Indians was plain to Washington. Braddock's fatal mistake in ignoring them was a vivid recollection; but the same ignorance was displayed now by Colonel Bouquet, who wrote that "it would be easier to make Indians of our white men than to coax that damned tanny race." And this after Washington had explained painstakingly, almost in words of one syllable, the scouting value of these Indians and the necessity of keeping them friendly with the English rather than to add them to the number of their enemies. His letters to Forbes, Bouquet and St. Clair, during this expedition, are logical, common-sense epistles struggling against the hide-bound, British military mind.

The Forbes expedition developed an inter-colonial struggle in which the George Washington of 1758 stands out clearly. July twenty-fourth, Colonel Bouquet wrote, asking Washington's opinion as to the best route to be followed in marching against Duquesne. Forbes, with the British regulars, was moving west through Pennsylvania by way of Raystown, building his road as he moved, and Washington, with the Virginia troops,

was at Fort Cumberland waiting orders to effect a junction with this line of march. His reply, July twenty-eighth, expressed a cheerful willingness to march by any route but stated that the guides and scouts were united in opinion that Braddock's old road was the best, for which reason he asked for a conference on the matter. Pennsylvania was well aware of the commercial advantage accruing to her finances in a well built road leading to the rich western fur country and she was determined to have the British Army build this for her, in its progress toward Duquesne.

The Virginia idea was that the western country had been opened and explored by Virginians, a trading post already established at Red Stone (the farthest point west) by Virginians and a road built toward this point, which Braddock had improved and continued almost up to Fort Duquesne and which Virginia had spilt her blood to maintain. It would be, she felt, easier and quicker to march by this route than to cut a new road through new country and over the difficult mountain range of Laurel Hill.

To Washington the advantages of the Braddock route were so obvious that he could not but suspect the Pennsylvanians of being more in favor of their road-building than of capturing Fort Duquesne, and all the old prejudices engendered in the past by Pennsylvania's refusal to cooperate with the Virginia troops gave point to his suspicions. On August second he wrote a long letter to Bouquet in which he went into the history of Virginia's efforts and compared the distances and character of the two stretches of country through which the Braddock and the Pennsylvania roads would pass. A point of importance was the time element which seemed to be decidedly against the Pennsylvania route. The analysis of these routes and Washington's discussion of the food supplies show his engineering mind and a firm grasp of the principles of military transportation. He ended his argument with the statement: "I have offered nothing but what to me appears beyond a Probability: I have nothing to fear but for the General Service, and no hopes but the advantages it will derive from the Success of our operations, therefore cannot be suppos'd to have any private Interest or sinister views by any freedom my regard for the benefit of the Service on this occasion has induced me to use." And while this was true, it is equally true that Washington could not entirely divest himself of his habitual belief that northern Virginia and the Potomac Valley was the natural thoroughfare to the west. He had been brought

up on this idea and he did not once in his life suspect that there could be a better route. His letter to Major Halkett, the same day he wrote Bouquet, reveals how stirred he was: "If Colo. Bouquet succeeds in this point with the General, all is lost! All is lost by Heavens! Our Enterprise Ruin'd; and we stop'd at the Laurel Hill this Winter; not to gather Laurels, by the by, desirable in their effect. The Southern Indians turn'd against Us, and these Colonies become desolated by such an Acquisition to the Enemy's Strength." Here is the characteristically extravagant diction and the natural drop into dramatics where his feelings were strongly aroused.

The basis of this intense feeling was the old controversy between Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania in the matter of frontier defense. Virginia had the greatest frontier to protect, stretching from Fort Cumberland to the North Carolina line; Maryland, which claimed Cumberland as her fort, had a very small area to guard, and Pennsylvania's line of frontier swung sharply northeast from Cumberland, following the Appalachian ridge until it headed toward the Catskills in New York State. Naturally Pennsylvania's attention was mainly directed toward the north, and much of that attention was unnecessary because of the general friendliness of some of the Six Nations and the traditional attitude of the Indian toward the Quaker. Both Pennsylvania and Maryland, therefore, were rather lukewarm in cooperating with Virginia where the benefits would be reaped almost entirely by the latter state. Virginia naturally felt that a breach in her northern frontier would spell disaster for both Pennsylvania and Maryland as well as herself, but these two states, which experienced Indian raids from the Duquesne-Potomac area infrequently compared with those which damaged Virginia, could not be brought to appreciate the danger that Virginia continually faced.

Washington shared this feeling of protest against the neighboring states the more keenly because upon him fell the responsibility of defending the frontier, and criticism and blame were heaped upon him for every failure to protect the settlers. When he could not get the needed men and supplies from Virginia he tried to get them from Maryland and Pennsylvania. He failed and the failure depressed his spirits. He held Pennsylvania and Maryland responsible for the lack of some of the support he needed.

Now in the latest attempt (1758) to destroy Duquesne, the source of all the frontier suffering of Virginia, Pennsylvania was interfering to block the movement by insisting on "opening a Road 100 Miles in length over Mountains almost impassible," when winter was at hand and "when there is already a good Road made, a Road universally confess'd to be the best that either is, or can be found anywhere thro these Mountains." Washington could be excused for suspecting "a nigger in the wood-pile." He argued strongly and continuously against the Raystown road, but Pennsylvania's initial advantage of having first had the ear of General Forbes, coupled with large promises of wagons and supplies, had so predisposed the General's mind that the more Washington argued the more Forbes became convinced that the Pennsylvania route was the best. It was Washington's misfortune to arouse in Forbes's mind the same suspicion of Virginia which existed in Washington's mind against Pennsylvania. Washington felt obliged, from a concept of what he believed his duty "to His Majesty and the Colony whose Troops I have the Honour to Command," to declare his sentiments, but he wrote, "If I am deceiv'd in my opinion, I shall acknowledge my Error as becomes a Gentleman, led astray by judgment and not by prejudice." He was ignorant of the fact that herculean efforts were being made at Easton to win all the northern Indians from their French affiliations and that the slow advance of Forbes under these circumstances was not altogether a dangerous risk. But unaware of this negotiation, the crawling progress nearly drove Washington insane. He was ordered to send strong scouting parties along Braddock's old road to confuse the enemy as to which route would be followed by the main army; but he was unable to move in force for want of pack-horses to carry provisions. His details were obliged to return as soon as they exhausted the provisions they carried in their knapsacks, so that these diversions did not carry much conviction. It is doubtful too if the French, with their Indian scouts, could have been deceived for more than twenty-four hours as to what the British really intended, and after due allowance is made for all the factors involved, it is difficult to give much credit to Forbes. His slow advance was merely the British habit of mind rather than a deeply thought-out and deliberate purpose.

Washington finally succeeded in moving out from Fort Cumberland and joining Forbes at Raystown, September thirteenth. Time had been

hanging heavily on his hands, while waiting for provisions, for pack-horses, for wagons, for hospital arrangements and, lastly, for the orders themselves, to march forward to Raystown. He wrote to George William Fairfax several times and Mrs. Fairfax undertook to answer his letter of August twenty-third to her husband. Washington's reply to her letter (September twelfth) has furnished material for a deal of speculative discussion, but this is highly strained and unjustifiably suggestive. That he delighted at the opportunity, in his bored state, of carrying on a bantering correspondence is quite evident, but to claim more than this requires an imagination unresponsive to the niceties of honor and good breeding. "Dear Madam," wrote Washington. "Yesterday I was honored with your short but very agreeable favor of the first Inst. How joyfully I catch at the happy occasion of renewing a correspondence which I feared was disrelished on your part, I leave to time, that never failing expositor of all things, and to a monitor equally faithful in my own breast, to testify. In silence I now express my joy; silence, which in some cases, I wish the present, speaks more intelligently than the sweetest eloquence."

Here is the romantic, theatrical nature predominant again and with it the habit of dealing in polite superlatives when writing to a woman. In this case the woman was the wife of his best friend, an inspiring personality and member of that family for whom he always felt high respect and obligation. To leave to time and a faithful monitor in his own breast to prove his enthusiasm at reopening a correspondence, which had evidently lightened many drab hours in two former campaigns was bringing forward some heavy artillery to support a minor fact. The silence which he wished (though he meant hoped), would speak more intelligently than the sweetest eloquence, must have been slightly ambiguous to Sally Cary Fairfax, though at first reading it sounds sonorously effective. Mrs. Fairfax seems to have teased him about Mrs. Custis and in return Washington set himself to tease. If he did not succeed in this he did succeed in teasing a portion of posterity, for the paragraph in which he professed himself a votary of love is ambiguous enough to satisfy any one who is sure that he can extract therefrom the exact meaning. The contradictions therein are many and not the least of the puzzle is the fact that Mrs. Custis fits into the diagram as the unmentioned object of affection, as well as any of those individuals to whom the rôle has been assigned by clever

analysts. Again, a reference to Addison's *Cato*, the drama that Washington knew so well, may serve to explain Washington's language: "If you allow," wrote Washington, "that any honor can be derived from my opposition to our present system of management, you destroy the merit of it entirely in me by attributing my anxiety to the animating prospect of possessing Mrs. Custis, when—I need not tell you, guess yourself. Should not my own Honor and country's welfare be the excitement?" Portius, in *Cato*, speaks thus of Juba: "He loves our sister Marcia [substitute Martha for Marcia], greatly loves her. But still the smother'd Fondness burns within him, When most it swells and labours for a Vent, The Sense of Honour and Desire of Fame Drive the big Passion back into his Heart." Here is a tit for tat, in response to whatever teasing Mrs. Fairfax had indulged. Here is Washington's question, in effect, to Mrs. Fairfax: "Do I love Mrs. Custis? Should not my desire for fame from this expedition be greater than this love, just now?" Then follows what has been harped upon as Washington's acknowledgment of love for Mrs. Fairfax and, though it should be unnecessary, an easy experiment of paraphrasing Washington's words gives as certain and honorable result as the strained interpretation gives a dishonorable one. Recall, from this Washington letter, that it is plain Mrs. Fairfax twitted Washington about Mrs. Custis and then read Washington's reply: "Tis true I profess myself a votary of love. I acknowledge that a lady is in the case and further confess that this lady is known to you [I mean Mrs. Custis and, though I am willing that you should know, I do not see the need of spreading this news abroad.]² Yes, Madam, as well as she is to one who is too sensible of her charms to deny the Power whose influence he feels and must ever submit to [and this I tell you plainly is the way I feel about Mrs. Custis] I feel the force of her amiable beauties in the recollection of a thousand tender passages that I could wish to obliterate, till I am bid to revive them. But experience, alas! reminds me how impossible this is [with Mrs. Custis in New Kent and I several hundred miles away in Pennsylvania] and evinces an opinion which I have long entertained that there is a Destiny which has control of our actions not to be resisted by the strongest efforts of Human Nature. [It was my destiny to embark upon this expedition against Fort Duquesne and now that I am in it, I must continue, though I would fain get out and return to Mrs. Custis.] You have drawn me dear

Madam, or rather I have drawn myself, into an honest confession of a simple Fact [my love for Mrs. Custis]. Misconstrue not my meaning [for this is no idle flirtation] doubt it not, nor expose it. The world has no business to know [as yet] the object of my Love declared in this manner to you, when I want to conceal it [for the time being]. One thing above all things in this world I wish to know, and only one person of your acquaintance can solve me that or guess my meaning [and that is does Mrs. Custis love me as much as I love her]. But adieu to this till happier times, if I shall ever see them [if we shall ever capture Fort Duquesne and be rid of this continual frontier warfare]. The hours at present are melancholy dull."

Mrs. Fairfax's answer to this has not come to light, but Washington's next letter was a more deliberate tease: "Do we still misunderstand the true meaning of each other's letters? I think it must appear so, tho' I would fain hope the contrary as I cannot speak plainer without—But I'll say no more, and leave you to guess the rest." He had no inclination just then to continue this badinage for he was in a hurry to get to what he considered the real news of his letter, that of Major Grant's defeat, which in his view was more important. The soldier in him reported the defeat in the usual terms. "The enemy," he wrote, "lost more Men than we did in the Engagement" and then he reverted to his dramatic romanticism: "Thus it is that the Lives of the brave are often disposed of—but who is there that does not rather Envy than regret a Death that gives birth to Honour and Glorious memory." This is not out of keeping with the age of twenty-six. In answer to what seems to be an allusion by Mrs. Fairfax to some amateur theatricals Washington thought that his "time would be more agreeably spent in playing a part in *Cato* with the company you mention, and myself doubly happy in being Juba to such a Marcia, as you must make." And this is the sum and substance of all the curious pother over meanings, which merely is that he would enjoy being one of the two principal characters, with Mrs. Fairfax the other, in a play with which they, and every one of the colonies, were well acquainted. Amateur theatricals evidently were a well-known social diversion in colonial times and it seems that Addison's *Cato*, judging from the number which Benjamin Franklin printed and sold, was a standard drama.

There is but one more point worth noticing. "You ask," wrote Wash-

ington to Mrs. Fairfax, "if I am not tired of the length of your letter? No, Madam I am not, nor never can be while the Lines are an inch asunder to bring you in haste to the end of the Paper." Here is not a word as to the so obvious reply, if we are to take the interpretation that this is a love-letter to Mrs. Fairfax; that any letter from her, no matter how short, etc., etc. Instead is the very practical reply, though couched in polite phrase, that he wanted her letters to while away tedious hours and, therefore, her wide spaced writing did not exactly satisfy his expectations. And lest the unjustifiable inferences still linger, some of the closing sentences of this letter may be quoted: "Your letter," wrote Washington, "to Captain Gist I forwarded by a safe hand the moment it came to me. His answer shall be carefully transmitted." But surely Sally Cary Fairfax could not have been carrying on a flirtatious correspondence with Gist, even though this forwarding of letters by a third hand is made a strong point in Washington's case, by his detractors. "Captain Mercer, to whom I delivered your message and compliments, joins me very heartily in wishing you and the Ladies of Belvoir the perfect enjoyment of every happiness this world affords. Be assured that I am, dear Madam with the most unfeigned regard [despite all the foolish badinage above], your most obedient and most obliged humble servant. N. B. Many accidents happening (to use a vulgar saying) between the cup and the lip, I choose to make the exchange of carpets myself, since I find you will not do me the honor to accept mine."

Another little point lies in the interesting detail of Washington's paying William Copan 15/ for putting George William Fairfax's cipher "(3 letters)" on the Fairfax pew at 5/ per letter, as Fairfax had gone to England on business. A small neighborly service which holds significance. Friendship for a fellow church-warden; Fairfax's intention to return from England to Virginia and last, but by no means least, the utter impossibility of such things being thought of and attended to by Washington if the relations of Mrs. George William Fairfax and himself had been such as several writers of to-day would have us believe. It is difficult to be patient with the ideas put forth with much parade of knowledge about Sally Cary Fairfax and George Washington. The ideas are entirely products of a type of mind. If George Washington were so completely lacking in gentlemanly instincts as these writers would have us believe, he

would be fundamentally such a worthless scoundrel that every one of his thousands of acts of delicate honor would have to be painstakingly explained and logically fitted to a man utterly lacking in comprehension of a most important social principle. The task is too great for any one to accomplish.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CAPTURE OF FORT DUQUESNE

AT RAYSTOWN General Forbes called for suggestions from his officers as to the line of march through the woods to Fort Duquesne and Brigadier Washington submitted two plans, based upon his Braddock experience. He supplemented them with neatly drawn diagrams which presented his ideas graphically. The troops were to move forward in columns, so that they could spread out, fanwise, when attacked, with the main body amply protected by flank guards. A fundamental principle was dividing the men into small squads, under the immediate command of subalterns who, in turn, were directed by the captains. It was a modern open-order fighting and created a mobile force with the small unit strongly held under a central control, while a sufficient body of men was held in reserve, ready to deal the crushing blow at the point needed. It was entirely too original for the British close-order mind of the time, but a thorough study of these two plans may enlighten those who persist in the notion that George Washington had little military ability.

But in one point his predictions failed. A new gap, an easier passage, was unexpectedly found across Laurel Ridge and the expedition reached the west side of the mountain with surprising ease. Then, with the worst behind them, the habit of the British military mind decided Forbes to go into winter quarters and leave the attempt on Duquesne until spring. Precisely this same method of thought ruined the British plans several times, later, in the Revolutionary War. Fortunately, after a council of war had decided to wait until spring, three Frenchmen were captured and their stories showed the weakness of Fort Duquesne with such convincing effect that a light column was at once thrown forward. It reached the fort twelve hours after the French had set it afire and retreated. The British took possession of the smoking ruins on November twenty-fifth and renamed the place Fort Pitt.

The long strain was over, the main objective in Virginia's frontier de-

fense of four bloody years had been accomplished at last and Brigadier George Washington "put things in train" to present his resignation. Had he been reluctant to lay aside his uniform, the action of the Virginia Legislature in October was quite sufficient to overcome it. His warm friend, William Ramsay of Alexandria, wrote to him October seventeenth, that "The 1st Virginia Regiment had liked to have been broke by a vote of the House, but the old and judicious carried it against the young members by a majority of five. However they have so far prevailed, that unless the Regiment returns into this Colony by the 1st of December next and guard our frontiers, they are to be no longer in the pay of this Colony. There is to be no Lieut. Colo., Quarter Master, Adjutant nor Chaplain, and the yearly allowance for your table is voted away." With such a feeling in the House of Burgesses, Washington's inclination to arms vanished; he felt it useless to continue; but before he gave up he wrote from Loyal Hanna some cold facts for the new Governor, Francis Fauquier, to digest. The British regulars had declined to garrison Fort Pitt and General Forbes had ordered a detail of two hundred men from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia to take it over. "These," Washington wrote with some bitterness, "without *peculiar* exertions, must, I fear, abandon the place, or perish." The frontier would then be back "in the same distressed condition they have been for some time past." The Indian trade, he thought, should be managed by "Commissioners from each of the colonies . . . appointed to regulate the mode of that trade, and fix it on such a basis, that all the attempts of one colony undermining another, and thereby weakening and diminishing the general system might be frustrated." Washington does not seem to have known of Benjamin Franklin's plan of union, which was proposed at the Albany Congress in 1754, and, though this suggestion to Fauquier is but a broad general thought, it contains the same germ of political union which later was to develop as a dominant principle of Washington's life.

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CHAPTER XV

WANING OF THE BRITISH TRADITION—MARRIAGE—THE CUSTIS CHILDREN—MUSIC

THE capture of Fort Duquesne, Washington felt, closed the military chapter of his life. It was the end of a road he had taken five years before with the high hopes and ambitions of a youth of twenty-one years. The glamour of the British Army had cast its spell over America and Washington was in earnest about a military career, though it is doubtful if he had, in the beginning, a clear idea of a definite military goal. Youth is much the same at all times and in all climes and he was satisfied to work energetically toward a dreamed-of glorious future, even though that future was hazily defined in his own imagination.

But the hard disillusionments of the half-decade that followed his entrance into a military life clarified that hazy imagination. Slowly and, after a time, bitterly, it was borne in upon him that Lieutenant-Governor Dinwiddie, the high representative of the Crown and the Mother Country in America, was not the great patron of Virginia and the Virginians he should have been and did not always govern with the welfare of Virginians as the primary consideration. So, when the House of Burgesses broke with the Governor, it was only natural that the Virginia Commander-in-Chief should side with his countrymen and cast in his lot with the Legislature. A comparison of Washington's letters to Dinwiddie and those he wrote at the same time to the Speaker of the House and other influential Burgesses makes plain the situation. The Colonel of the forces stationed in the wilderness, three hundred miles away from the seat of government, could not wait upon the delays and postponements of a Governor's quarrel with his Legislature; provisions, powder, arms, supplies of all kinds were things needed and not things to be argued about. When the royal Governor failed him, Washington appealed for direct results to the Legislature. It was in this struggle beyond the mountains of Virginia, where he attempted to hold back the savages on the one hand and

get supplies for his troops on the other, that the Americanizing of George Washington began. It was of slow growth, for to the end of his colonial military activity, he was overly careful to pay the royal Governor every deference, every respect and to be meticulously scrupulous to obey every order as far as it lay within his power. According to present-day American ideas he was too meticulous in these regards; but it is difficult for twentieth-century America to understand clearly the eighteenth and George Washington's English heritage produced in him a long suffering loyalty.

The greatest shattering of accepted tradition was the violent shock of Monongahela's bloody field. General Braddock's personal charm neutralized much of the preliminaries but the crushing defeat completely demolished this personal influence. The famous British Red-coats demonstrated their ineptitude and panic under the eye of the Virginia colonials who were fighting the fight of despair and dying like men. Dunbar's panic-stricken and unnecessary flight and refusal to stop before he reached Philadelphia added to this feeling of disgust over a shattered ideal, and the Forbes campaign, three years later, though successful, merely confirmed and strengthened in Washington the opinion he had formed of British military prowess during the Braddock fiasco.

Fort Duquesne was the vital objective in Virginia's frontier defense and as Washington's thwarted military ambition and enthusiasm waned under the continued demonstrations of British obstinacy and self-sufficiency, he planned to leave a service in which it had been plainly shown that the colonial officer could hope for nothing in the way of a career. His opinion as to the French possession of the fort was often given, but is best expressed in his letter to his London kinsman, Richard Washington, April 15, 1757: "We must bid adieu to peace and safety whilst the French are allow'd to possess the Ohio, and to practice their hellish Arts among the numerous Tribes of Indian Nations that inhabit those Regions." That the English were always straining every nerve to gain the friendship of the Six Nations Indians and turn them against the French did not appear quite so hellish to Washington's frontier mind.

That Washington intended the Forbes campaign to be his last is indicated by many things but by none more so than his standing for election as a burgess from Frederick in July, 1758.

The liquid refreshments furnished by Washington at this election were copious. There were seventy-six gallons of rum-punch, twenty-one gallons of wine, three and a half of brandy (a tribute to the potency of brandy, or a comment upon the taste of Shenandoah Valley voters) and forty-six gallons of beer. The usual cakes, without which no Virginia election seemed complete, were overlooked or forgotten in the abundance of fluid cheer which graced the occasion. There were only seven hundred and ninety-one voters, which would allow each one about a pint and a half of encouragement, but there were, of course, many non-voters and Washington afterward wrote to Colonel and Mrs. James Wood, who managed this important part of the election: "I am extremely thankful to you and my other Friends for entertaining the Freeholders in my name. I hope no Exceptions were taken to any that voted against me but that all were alike treated and all had enough; it was what I much desired." This attitude toward his political antagonists thus early in life, is a point worth remembering later and helps to explain the personal hold that Washington obtained upon the men of his generation.

Washington's marriage to Mrs. Martha Custis, daughter of Colonel John Dandridge and widow of Daniel Parke Custis, took place January 6, 1759, a week or two after his resignation.

Of this marriage, as of his courtship, little is known beyond the fact and, it may be pointed out, that little is known of any courtship even in these days of enterprising newspapers; so that it is neither surprising nor significant that the stories of this part of the lives of George Washington and Mrs. Martha Custis are nothing but gratuitous, imaginary pictures. We have the facts, from Washington's expense account, that he visited Mrs. Custis, March 25, 1758, and again in June of that year and that his gratuities and tips to the servants on both these occasions were larger than his usual generous ones elsewhere; that on May 4, 1758, he bought a ring from Philadelphia which cost sixteen shillings, which may or may not have been his wedding-ring and that there are no entries of any expenses bearing upon, or that can be identified with, the wedding.

Washington's accounts and invoices of goods ordered from London interfere also with the smug assertiveness with which most of the so-called facts of his courtship have been laid before the public, for they introduce elements that are difficult to fit smoothly into the picture heretofore

painted. The date of Washington's betrothal to Mrs. Custis is approximately known; but the unusually heavy expenditures for fitting up Mount Vernon in the year 1757 may properly be interpreted as based upon the existence of a rather definite understanding a year at least before the accepted date of the engagement. The material purchased and the articles ordered were, in quantity and kind, such as no bachelor would have bothered with, unless he had a very definite aim in view. London wall-paper of various kinds and papier-mâché ceiling material; china and glassware, table silver and pewter, all marked with Washington's crest; furniture, chairs and tables, all mahogany; sheeting and toweling, carpets and brooms are numbered among those things that a man was unlikely to think of, or if he thought them necessary, he would have ordered a much smaller quantity, as being sufficient. It is true that Colonel George Lee and his wife, who had been Ann Fairfax, Lawrence Washington's widow, moved from Mount Vernon in 1757 and George Washington naturally would wish to refit the house; but not to the wholesale extent which his orders show, if he had expected to live there alone.

No authentic record of Washington's marriage ceremony has survived and the statement that it was at the "White House," Mrs. Custis's home on the Pamunky, is as unproven as that it occurred at St. Peter's church in New Kent.

The story of a meeting at Colonel Chamberlayne's may be quite true as to fact, but it is improbable that this was their first meeting. It is not inconceivable that Mrs. Custis often accompanied the Dandridges and Bassetts to Williamsburg and it is equally inconceivable that in his visits to the gay capital Colonel Washington did not encounter so charming a young widow. If their troth was plighted at Chamberlayne's, it was quite likely the result of previous meetings and that Colonel Washington's loss of enthusiasm for a military life was coeval with his interest in Mrs. Custis. His candidacy for the Legislature in 1758 is confirmatory evidence of an intention of settling his life along civil lines, and this, for the Virginia gentleman, meant almost necessarily, a seat in the House of Burgesses.

The young couple went to Williamsburg in time to allow Washington to take his seat in the House as a Burgess from Frederick and to receive the thanks of the House, on February twenty-second, for his services and

conduct in the Forbes expedition. These thanks, by vote of the House, were delivered by the Speaker and, according to the Journal, were received by Colonel Washington "standing in his place."¹

Beyond a ball in Williamsburg and the theater, there is nothing upon which to feed the imagination. The Washingtons did not stay at the capital until the session ended, but set out for Fairfax early in April so that the bride's first view of Mount Vernon was when spring was tinting the landscape with delicate color. Washington had written ahead to faithful John Alton to prepare the mansion house for their arrival and his directions have the pleasing homely touch. Belvoir had performed the neighborly service of taking care of the keys and Alton was to get them from Colonel Fairfax. He was to have

the House very well cleand, and were you to make fires in the Rooms below it w'd Air them. You must get two of the best Bedsteads put up, one in the Hall Room, and the other in the little dining Room that used to be, and beds made on them against we come. You must also get out the Chairs and Tables, and have them very well rubd and Cleand; the Stair case ought also to be polished in order to make it look well. Enquire abt. in the Neighborhood, and get some Eggs and Chickens, and prepare in the best manner you can for our coming, you need not however take out any more of the Furniture than the Beds and Tables and Chairs in order that they may be well rubd and cleand.

After a week or so at Mount Vernon the Washingtons again set out for Williamsburg where they enjoyed the purse races, settled some of the Custis estate business and Washington purchased a few negro servants, a horse, and took several chances in various raffles. They did not return to Fairfax until about the middle of July and on September twentieth, Washington wrote to Richard Washington, in London: "I am now fixed at this Seat with an agreeable Consort for life and hope to find more happiness in retirement than I ever experienc'd amidst a wide and bustling world." Here again is the stilted imagery of a romantic habit of expression. Certainly the confines of colonial Virginia were a rather limited portion of the wide and bustling world, though the western frontier of the colony was a wide sweep of territory and, with a couple of Indian fights occurring thereon every month, it justified the word bustling.

Almost at once after Washington had become fixed at Mount Vernon he began to be plagued with difficulties with his English correspondents. As guardian for the two Custis children it was necessary to submit yearly accounts for his management of the estates to the Virginia House of Burgesses, and although he requested and explained to the London merchants the need of statements of accounts, his requests were seldom complied with. From the long invoices of goods ordered and received by him from London, much of interest and value to our knowledge of Washington is to be gleaned and not the least of these gleanings are the many confirmatory evidences of Washington's deep love of children. The invoice drawn up in nine months after his marriage calls for "10/ worth of toys and 6 little books for Childn begg. to Read." Also "1 fash-dressd Baby 10/ and other Toys 10/." And a year later, there came to delight the hearts of the Custis children "A Tunbridge Tea Sett; 3 Neat Tunbridge Toys; A Neat Book; fash. Tea Chest; A Bird on Bellows; A Cuckoo; A turnabout Parrot; A Grocers Shop; A Neat dressd Wax Baby; An Aviary; A Prussian Dragoon; A Man Smoaking and 6 Small books for Children." In 1761 a Bible and prayer-book were ordered for each of the Custis children in which their names were to be written in gold letters and "a Fash. dressd Doll to cost a Guinea" for Patsy Custis and another doll, probably for second best, to cost five shillings. Patsy was also treated to a "Box of Ginger br'd Toys and Sugr. Imags. and Comfits" and a "Very good Spinit, to be made by Mr. Plinius, Harpsicord Maker in South Audley Street Grosvenor Square." Washington begged "as a favour that Mr. Cary [his factor] would bespeak this Instrument as for himself or a friend, and not let it be known that it is intended for Exportation. Send a good assortment of spare Strings to it." So much has been made of the harpsichord, later ordered for Nelly Custis that this spinet for Patsy seems to have been overlooked.

Although Washington could neither play nor sing, he possessed a natural liking for music.² The numerous tickets he purchased for concerts is evidence of this and, of course, the music in the theaters he so often attended was that of the European classics, for America, in this as in every other fashionable activity, followed the style set by England.

But although Washington could neither sing nor play upon any musical instrument he had an ear for music and an understanding of its value to

life. The general orders of the Revolution dwell upon the value of music to the army and some ten years after the war he recognized the old Continental tunes and the old Continental manner of playing them when some old soldiers serenaded him in the town of Reading.³ The army knew that he liked music and this knowledge carried Procter's artillery band (it was nothing but a drum and fife corps) tramping through the ice and snow of that dreary winter of 1778, in Valley Forge, to serenade their General on his birthday. It was a gesture of affection which brought the ragged musicians some of the very few silver coins left in the purse of the Commander-in-Chief.

CHAPTER XVI

LIFE AT MOUNT VERNON—HUMOR AND RELIGION

FROM the Washington diary it is possible to reconstruct a comprehensive and delightful picture of life at Mount Vernon. After the feverish activities of the years 1753-58 he settled down with complete satisfaction into the life of a Virginia planter-farmer and brought to bear upon that life all the knowledge of men and the world that he had gained. He ordered from London the latest approved books upon agriculture and though one of them was titled as a speedy way to grow rich through farming, it is not to be doubted that its practical value to farm economy rather than its fanfare about riches was the deciding element in its purchase. His interest and happiness in developing his farms to the highest point of productivity is too plainly writ in his letters to admit of any doubt as to his ambition at this period. The yearly round of activities ministered to his complete contentment. January and February were usually devoted to listing his live stock, preparing and planning his fencing, making general repairs, and erecting buildings, with indoor carpentry and smithwork, threshing, grubbing and preparing ground when the weather permitted. March and April were the planting and sowing months, seining the Potomac when the fish began to run, for Washington's fishing industry, besides the food it furnished to his slaves (the fish being salted down into barrels), was a good paying activity. (In 1775 he sold eighty barrels of herring for £50:5:9 and in 1774, nine hundred and five barrels for £108:12. Shad he sometimes sold by weight as in this same year, thirteen hundred and twenty-one pounds brought him £15:10:1.) Plowing was begun early for the spring planting and Washington was for ever experimenting with soils and fertilizers in composts and hot frames which he managed with his own hands. Grafting and slipping were practised on a large scale. In April the journey to Williamsburg to attend the session of the Burgesses broke in upon the farm duties, but instructions were left with the overseers. Grass field cutting began at times as early as June, and sowing

for next year's crop was carried on. Mowing by cradling, and gathering and storing were August activities. September and October finished the harvests, in which most of the staples were included, and preparations were made for the killing and storing of meats. November carried him to Williamsburg for the fall session of the Legislature and December saw the meats attended to and preparations for the next season. This is the broad outline; there were, of course, many diversions and many details. Stock care and breeding included that of horses and hounds for hunting and there was an almost continuous round of social gaities when, with friends and neighbors, Washington rode over the fields and fences of Mount Vernon through the woods behind the singing hounds. It took good riding to stay with the Mount Vernon pack and though he did not know it, George Washington was then training for the eight years of hard saddle work which the Revolutionary War was to force upon him. The diary record of these fox-hunts does not mention the presence of the ladies, yet the purchase of a hunting saddle for young Patsy Custis¹ implies that the hunts were sometimes enlivened by fair riders. Horses were an abiding interest with Washington and he had not only the horseman's feeling for a good mount, but a thorough understanding of chariot stock. In 1771 he purchased Lord Botetourt's team of grays and the hunters he rode to hounds were above the ordinary strain. It is not generally realized that before George Washington was twenty-eight years old he had been longer in the saddle and had traveled on horseback over a greater part of America than any other man in the colonies. His journeys had taken him from Williamsburg to Lake Erie, from Cumberland to North Carolina, from Winchester, Virginia, to Boston, Massachusetts, and some of these rides had been at the hazard of the Indian arrow and scalping knife.

Washington mentions his duck hunting and other gunning trips often enough to make it plain that he enjoyed such activities and the record of his fishing trips, with London-made rod and line, are proof positive of the real pleasure he obtained from the sport. It is not possible to reconstruct any of these activities with accuracy, but to mention them helps to dissolve some of the nickel plate with which Washington's figure has been frozen into metallic hardness. The picture of him sighting along the barrel of his shotgun at a fast-flying mallard, or casting a fly upon the roiling

Potomac water at the Great Falls brings him into a large brotherhood of outdoor men, who can hail him across the years with understanding.

In 1760, one year after Washington's marriage, the Mount Vernon plantations had not yet been developed to a self-supporting basis. In January of that year he was forced to purchase a supply of pork from his neighbor, Daniel French, who had broken a former agreement to sell at 20/ when the market price unexpectedly rose to 22/6; another irritation was the short weight iron sold to him from the Occoquan furnace. The monopolistic control exercised by English manufacturing over the colonies was increasingly felt and the efforts to break this control were many. Washington contributed five pounds toward one effort which planned iron works for the Shenandoah region, a gesture, like many others, expressive of goodwill rather than a firm faith in the success of the scheme.²

Tobacco was the principal crop in Virginia, and like other Virginians, Washington depended upon its sales for the upkeep of current expenses. A poor crop in Virginia or a poor market in England was keenly felt by the colonists. To these unavoidable hazards were added some sharp and clever practises on the part of the English merchants, and the Virginia planters were largely at the mercy of their British factors. The supplies sent to Virginia, on order of the planters, were not always of the best quality, though there was no abatement of price on that account, and a system of shifted responsibility effectually blocked all hope of redress for a buyer, separated from the seller by three thousand miles of salt water. In general the system was for the planter to consign all his tobacco to one correspondent and order all his supplies through him. The factor distributed the orders through the trade and saw to the receipt and shipment of all the parcels in one vessel. The factor billed the goods as purchased, giving the names and prices charged by the various merchants but, in case of dispute, damage claims, etc., the factor merely acted as an attorney and refused to assume responsibility of any kind for the goods. The misunderstandings and downright dishonesties were all too many, and Benjamin Franklin's anecdote over the reception by the government, of a petition that ministers of the Gospel be sent over to America, typifies the British attitude toward the colonists and their tobacco crop. Said the petitioner: "But, my lord, we Virginians have souls to be saved!" "Souls!" was the reply. "Damn your souls! Make tobacco!"

In the end, after some years of effort and contention, Washington stopped raising tobacco for export.

These tobacco-sales difficulties are progressively pictured in Washington's letters. The official tobacco inspection and the legal safeguards built around the commerce by Parliament were such that it is difficult to arrive at any other conclusion than that his London agents took advantage of every little point to increase their tobacco profit at Washington's expense. Time and again he was forced to complain that his tobacco brought lower prices than that of his neighbors and the fact that he couched these complaints in most moderate form makes them the more impressive. He was extra careful as to the quality of his tobacco and though it was "all Sweetscented and neatly managed,"⁸ the crops of others, not a whit better in quality, fetched the better prices. Of course Washington was not the only planter who felt at times the effects of this unscrupulous practise, and though these dealings were strictly private business transactions they had an unfortunate effect upon the fortunes of the British empire. Through a long period of years this cause of complaint gradually built up in his mind a feeling of antagonism and protest which could not but have had subconscious weight in the final big decision in the eventful year of 1775. It was the cumulative effect of increasing resentment against which loyalty to the crown unconsciously lessened.

It was necessary to purchase practically everything needed from England as there were few manufactures under the English laws in America. Household supplies, carpeting, furniture, china, silver, glass, hardware, paints and other staples were ordered by annual or semi-annual invoices. Clothing, dresses, coats, hats, shoes, gloves, handkerchiefs, even buttons and thread had to be purchased from London, and as Washington complained to Robert Cary & Co., September 28, 1760, that it was the custom, there was "Some Reason to believe, with many Shop keepers and Tradesmen in London when they know Goods are bespoke for Exportation to palm sometimes old, and sometimes very slight and indifferent Goods upon Us taking care at the same time to advance 10, 15 or perhaps 20 pr Ct. upon them."

In Washington's case the yearly total of these supplies was large, but not extravagant, when it is remembered that Mount Vernon was practically a small village of two or three hundred people in itself, so that the

preparation of these lists and the ordering thereof, at least once and sometimes twice a year, was an enormous piece of work. The same thing had to be done for the York River plantations of young John Parke Custis, over which Washington exercised a guardianship. Because of this and the absolute lack of comprehension on the part of the London merchants of the distances in Virginia, some of Washington's bales of goods were put on any ship from London to the Old Dominion and the parcels were landed in York or Rappahannock, from whence the trouble, expense and loss to Washington in getting them up the Potomac was nearly as much again as the original shipping charges for the ocean freight. As to the produce value of the Washington and Custis plantations, a note of fish sales has been given; the tobacco made between 1760 and 1770 fluctuated greatly between ninety thousand pounds or more, and twenty-four thousand pounds. The value of the wheat crop was also somewhat of a variant, that of 1768 selling for £767:14:4 and that of 1769 bringing £1170:5:4. These figures, taken at random from Washington's accounts (Ledger A) will serve to show the size of the business of the Mount Vernon and Custis estates.

But it would be misleading to imagine that a strict attention to business precluded all enjoyment of life. Washington managed his affairs with attention, but a study of his accounts makes it plain that he was not the hard driving bargainer he has been called. He tried to keep track of every essential thing but the despairing entries at the end of so many years which note that an amount, in the neighborhood of a hundred pounds or more was lost, stolen or not charged, are proofs that George Washington was a man whose mind was above pounds, shillings and pence whenever other things, more important, were present.

The enjoyment of life and the living of it were more important than money to George Washington. Those who picture Washington as a sober solemn dignity will never be able to understand the man. Sober-minded he became after years of public service, struggling with a burden more than sufficient for any man; but the gradual change from a high-tempered youth who liked good company and whom good company liked, to a serious, carefully deciding man, was the result of a manful shouldering of what seemed to him high duties that his personal honor forbade him to shirk. The flashes of early humor which have survived in his diary record

of which "the Bread and Butter Ball" at Alexandria is one and Doctor Laurie "not getting it conducted agreeable to his own taste would claim no share of the merit of it" is another, have the dry humor which afterward manifested itself more often in satire.

The entry noting the disgust of Colonel Catesby Cocke at seeing an old negro at Mount Vernon which resembled "his own Image," has the element of hearty glee in it which is rather lacking in Washington's dry notation of Daniel French's hogs, which he had been compelled to buy, as there were no others available when French raised the price contrary to agreement. One of the hogs had strayed and was lost on the drive to Mount Vernon and Washington wrote that "the others might as well have been for their goodness." His comment on finding a lazy overseer "hard at work with an ax—very extraordinary this," was certainly recorded with a half-smile. When he married, at the age of twenty-seven, George Washington was rather well-grounded in his judgment of his fellow man, for there was nothing quite so well calculated to develop such judgment as those hard and stormy years of Indian fighting, among the rough American frontiersmen of the Virginia backwoods, and Washington's particular sense of humor had its roots in the direct biting forthrightness of the colonial brand of mirth.

Nothing is so deadly as an attempted explanation, or analysis of humor or a joke and George Washington has suffered because of such misguided attempts. Instances of humor occur in his Revolutionary War letters, but not more frequently than may be found in the letters of any man engaged in an important, absorbing and serious piece of work. There can be no doubt of Abraham Lincoln's humor, but if it is to be founded solely on Lincoln's letters that evidence alone is hardly sufficient. General Charles Lee, that strange erratic individual, and Benedict Arnold, whose personality has been submerged by his disgraceful conduct, both considered Washington appreciative of humor and both took pleasure in writing him in strains of jocularly, spiced at times with humorous anecdote, and no man will display humor where he thinks it will be neither appreciated nor understood. To Burwell Bassett, in 1773, Washington indulges his descriptive powers: The daughter of Mrs. Penelope French married Benjamin Dulany and Washington informed Bassett that "Our celebrated fortune, Miss French, whom half the world was in pursuit of, bestowed

her hand on Wednesday last, being her birthday (you perceive I consider myself under a necessity of accounting for the choice) upon Mr Ben Dulany, who is to take her to Maryland in a month from this time. Mentioning of one wedding puts me in mind of another, tho' of less dignity: this is the marriage of Mr. Henderson (of Colchester) to a Miss More (of the same place) remarkable for a very frizzled head, and good singing, the latter of which I shall presume it was that captivated the merchant."⁴

One of Washington's Revolutionary War quips is in his letter to Joseph Reed, November 20, 1775, asking Reed to hurry on shirts, medicines, etc., from New York, then largely under Tory domination. With dry satire Washington suggested that they be seized from the British stores in New York as they "cannot be had, I should think, upon better terms than on a loan from the best of Kings, so anxiously disposed to promote the welfare of his American subjects." And to Colonel George Baylor he wrote, May 23, 1777, on a request for a chaplain, "I see no objection to your [corps] having one, unless you suppose yours will be too virtuous and moral to require instruction." The value of chaplains was a firm belief with Washington, because of his conviction that the spirit of religion was necessary, and this without exhibiting partiality to any creed where other men were concerned. An Established Church habit of mind accustomed to seeing all ministers of the Gospel in the light of teachers and an acquaintance with the local ecclesiastical organization in which the Commissary, or head of the church in Virginia, was also the President of William and Mary College explains Washington's attitude in this particular. Underneath it was his fundamental belief that political liberty was safest where the mass of the people was well educated. While in command on the Virginia frontier, in the French and Indian War, he issued a standing order for church services on Sundays and saw to it that his troops marched to prayers. During the Revolution the army was ordered to attend Sunday services whenever it was possible to do so, and many were the exhortations to the soldiers to give thanks to the Almighty for victories and to live decently to deserve the support of Heaven in the struggle. Washington himself was a consistent, if not always a regular, churchgoer. In 1756 he signed the oath of conformity to the Established Church. He was a vestryman of Truro Parish (Pohick Church); he and George William Fairfax were wardens, 1765-67, and in this and his con-

nection with Christ Church, Alexandria, he witnessed the practical workings of the Episcopal system and its value to the social well-being of both the individual and society. There is very little documentary evidence of a religious nature that has survived, prior to the year 1755, but after Braddock's defeat, when he counted the bullet holes in his coat, and acknowledged with common-sense practicality that a power higher than man had saved him, Washington's belief in man's dependence upon the Creator became a growing faith which the experience of the Revolutionary War solidified into the conviction of mature manhood. It is plain, also, that a political or social belief in human liberty was woven into Washington's religious faith and that he was firm in his belief that this liberty was a gift from God to be striven for and earned by man. A check-up of Washington's diaries, while only a partial record, is nevertheless the only available one and reveals the interesting fact that after his marriage he appears as a more consistent church attendant and in the distinct periods of political stress and strain he went to church oftener than usual.

CHAPTER XVII

ILLNESS—FINANCES—LITERARY SKILL AND A WORD ON SLAVERY

THE election methods of 1761, to corral votes in Virginia, were not strangely different from many of those of the present time. Washington's letter to Captain Van Swearingen, May fifteenth, shows that he canvassed Frederick rather thoroughly. He attended a cock-fight and was present at a wedding; two important social events in backwoods country life, and he seems to have traveled along the main highroad, stopping at strategic points and reaching Winchester in time "to wait my doom" on Monday. That he was a good electioneer is proven by his success in this election and in all those which followed, as he was continuously reelected from Frederick and, later, Fairfax, until the Revolutionary War broke out.¹

The middle of the year 1761 brought another physical breakdown to Washington and he again traveled up to the Berkeley warm springs for relief. His fevers and pains, though not well described, may have been of the rheumatic type (perhaps the old "break-bone" fever) and they lasted for three or four months. He returned from the mountains before the cool autumn weather, improved to such an extent that he could write (to Richard Washington, October 20, 1761) that he would "soon be restored I hope to perfect health again." The attack had been violent for he described it as such that "I have in appearance been very near my last gasp: the Indisposition . . . Increased upon me and I fell into a very low and dangerous State. Once I thought the Grim King would certainly master my utmost efforts and that I must sink in spite of a noble struggle, but thank God, I have now got the better of the disorder."

In November Washington was able to attend the session of the Burgesses in which nothing of very great interest is to be noted, beyond the fact that he presented Peter Stover's petition for authority to lay out a new town in Frederick County and thus became, in a sense, the sponsor for Strasburg, in the Shenandoah Valley, which was founded as Stover's

Town, in 1761. During this year also Washington functioned as a justice of the peace for Fairfax County. The first record we have of this appointment is in 1760. By a logical inference, he continued as such for several years and in 1771 he ordered from London the latest edition of the four-volume work *The Justice of the Peace and Parish Officer*, by Richard Burn. This office explains the many entries in his diaries of his going up to court at Alexandria. It is supposed that he held his court in one of the rooms in the old county court-house and it is unfortunate that no record of his cases or decisions have survived, for the justices of colonial times seem to have been much higher judicial officers and much more important than justices of the peace now are. The many times he acted as referee in disputes, some of which are noted in his diaries, are evidences of the opinion that his fellow Virginians had of his fair-mindedness. But it is to Washington's expense accounts that we must go to find the homely touches, the intimate items that bring his personality into clearer view. From these we know his gastronomic tastes included a decided liking for watermelons, for oysters, for chestnuts, walnuts, Madeira wine, turkeys and oranges, Potomac shad, Gloucester, Cheshire and Cheddar cheeses, anchovies, olives and capers, Jordan almonds, Rhenish and Canary wine, English porter and strong beer, as well as the delicate Hyson tea.

The year following his marriage there are many delightful entries over the meanings of which it is pleasant to speculate. A Dutch oven is one of these and £4:7:3 to the jeweler in Williamsburg in November rouses interest as to whether this was a Christmas gift to his bride or trinkets for the Custis children. The following year in November he paid 50/ for a locket; a charity sermon touched his sensibility and pocketbook to the extent of £1:1:3 and when the news of the big fire in Boston of March, 1760, reached Virginia, Washington subscribed £12 for the sufferers. The entries of response to personal appeals for charity are so numerous that they can have no satisfactory explanation other than being the record of a generous and open-handed nature.

The numerous entries of balanced accounts "By loss" are sufficient in number and totals to make any other explanation impossible and, if more evidence were needed, it would be supplied by the treatment accorded to widows and heirs of nearly bankrupt estates. Among these the heirs of

William Strother stand excused for £22:16:3; Mrs. Sarah Barnes for £1:18:4; the widow of William Nations for £112 while a donation of £1:11:11 was made to her at the same time and Mrs. Elizabeth Dawson, of Williamsburg, was never reminded of the £2 which she once borrowed. In the aggregate these balances "By loss" would total to a fairly respectable sum during the years.

Washington was careful in financial matters, but there is not the slightest documentary evidence to show that he was niggardly, close or stingy. His carefulness was entirely the result of the exacting responsibilities of his command on the Virginia frontier, when thousands of pounds of state funds passed through his hands, to be vouched for as expended for military supplies, for food, for Indians, for pay to soldiers, for civil claims against the state and in the thousand and one ways that money must be disbursed in war-time. So too the exactitude demanded in accounting to the Legislature for the receipts and expenditures of the Custis estates and the need of keeping a close check upon the finances of the Mount Vernon farms, a village in itself, which nearly brought him to disaster, taught him the necessity of carefulness.

But along with this business ability and charitable generosity there had developed a nature nicely sensitive to the proprieties and keenly alive to the value of observing those proprieties. This was largely due to the necessity of handling the difficult problem of Governor Dinwiddie, and without a firmly grounded understanding of the niceties of human conduct, he could never have survived that ordeal. At the age of twenty-eight he was able to handle awkward situations with a smooth and careful certainty that presaged the steady wisdom he displayed sixteen years later in the Revolutionary War. Robert Mackenzie, an ex-captain of the Virginia regiment, wrote to Washington asking for a letter of recommendation to General Sir Jeffrey Amherst, and Washington replied, November 20, 1760:

I am sorry you should think it necessary to introduce a request that is founded upon Reason and equity with an Aplogy, to me; had you claimd that as a Right, which you seem rather to ask as a favour I shoud have thought my self wanting in that justice which is the distinguishing characteristick of an Honest Man to have with-held it from you. But how to answer your purpose and at the same time to

avoid the Imputation of Impertinence, I am I confess, a little more at a loss to determine. That Genl. Amherst may have heard of such a Person as I am is probable; And this I dare venture to say is the Ultimate knowledge he has of me; how then shoud I appear to him in an Epistolary way and to set down to write a Certificate of your behaviour carries an Air of formality that seems more adapted to the soldiery than Officers. I must therefore beg the favour of you to make what use you please of this Letter. For Sir with not more pleasure than truth, I can declare to you and the World, that while I had the honour of Commanding the Regiment, your conduct both as an Officer and a Gentleman were exceptionable good. . . .

Then Washington goes into Mackenzie's conduct in more detail. The cleverness of this letter in fully meeting Mackenzie's wishes and at the same time neutralizing the risk of being thought officious, is an early evidence of the skill afterward shown in phrasing his letters to the Continental Congress. Washington's literary ability like many other of his talents has suffered from misconception. It is true that his written discourse is often involved and occasionally flowery, as was the practise of the time; but there are few instances where his meaning is not entirely clear and often that meaning is expressed with incisive directness. His word arrangement followed the style of the age and was what was then considered "elegant"; few men of the Revolutionary War could phrase a more graceful letter and this is especially true of Washington's letters to women, even when those women were British or Tory sympathizers. His involved syntax, on the other hand, became more involved when he was stirred to anger; then his pronouns, subjects and verbs often become entangled in the emphasis of his expression.

A progressive improvement is plainly evident in Washington's letters, both in word arrangement and spelling, and his letters during his Presidency and at the end of his life are much better literary compositions than those of the colonial and revolutionary periods. The resiliency of George Washington's mind is impressive. There have been few Americans in whom self-improvement and self-culture were more dominant characteristics for the entire period of life than in George Washington. Nothing that had any bearing upon his understanding or knowledge of men and measures was unimportant to him and he was receptive to new ideas to the

end of his life. His willingness to follow new experiments in machinery are manifest through his relations with James Rumsey and the steam-boat and his letter to Cary & Co., of London, February 13, 1764, shows his eagerness to use every possible agricultural improvement: "We have been curiously entertained of late," he wrote, "with the description of an Engine lately constructed (I believe in Switzerland and undergone some Improvements since in England) for taking up Trees by the Roots; among other things it is related that Trees of considerable Diameter are forced up by this Engine, that Six hands in working one of them will raise two or three hundred Trees in the space of a day; and that an Acre of Ground may be eased of the Trees and laid fit for Plowing in the same time. . . ." He requested that one of the machines be sent him "provided the Engine is capable of performing what is related of it." He wrote also for one of the then new Rotheram plows and his own efforts to construct a mechanical wheat and corn planter are an interesting chapter in the diary record of 1787 and 1788.

The labor at Mount Vernon was performed by slaves, indentured servants and a few hired hands for the more important and higher grades of work. The overseers were all hired under signed witnessed agreements, but even here the results were not always satisfactory. Slave labor, Washington well knew, was poor in quality and extremely expensive and wasteful; added to this was Washington's aversion to the system. He had his share of the worthless and the runaways. One, called "Bo'sun" had an incurable loose-foot and another, "Tom," was not only a runaway but an incorrigible rogue with whom Washington's patience at last gave out and Tom was shipped to the West Indies and sold. He was one of the very few to be so treated for Washington was unalterably opposed to the traffic, though the West Indies cure for an incorrigible slave was practised in all the colonies from Massachusetts to Georgia. Washington prophesied thus early that unless slavery was done away with it would, eventually, prove a troublesome question.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE GROWTH OF ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

THE gradual development of an uneasy political situation in the colonies is only lightly touched upon in Washington's letters, after his marriage, but that touch is now and again a comment of value. The signing of the treaty of peace between Great Britain and France, he wrote, May 2, 1763, to Captain Robert Stewart, a former Virginia regiment officer: "diffuses general Joy"; but a petition of British merchants praying that a stop be put to the emissions of paper money by the colonies came as something of a shock to America: "Our Assembly is suddenly called," he wrote again, "in consequence of a Memorial of the British Merchts. to the Board of Trade representing the evil consequences of our Paper emissions, and their Lordships report and orders thereupon which I suppose will set the whole Country in Flames; this stir of the Merchts. seems to be ill timed and cannot be attended with any good effects; bad I fear it will."

The efforts of the colonial governors to check the Legislatures in issuing paper money engendered an opposition that weakened the hereditary respect of the colonists for the Mother Country and played a distinct part in accustoming them to the thought of resistance to an authority they had largely acknowledged heretofore as a matter of course. Washington's sense of public duty, well developed by this time, in addition to the particular matters in which as a planter his personal finances were involved, did not allow his interest to remain purely academic. The directness of his thought and the straight logic of his reasoning is well pictured in his letter to an uncle of Martha Washington, who lived in England. There is small doubt that Washington welcomed the opportunity to write to Francis Dandridge, confidently believing that the letter would be shown around, or at least talked of, in a circle in England from which some good to America might result. The Stamp Act, he wrote, was regarded by the colonies as an unconstitutional attack upon their liberties. America's trade with Britain would be lessened thereby, the American courts would

have to close because of not having the money to pay for the legal document stamps, so scarce was money in the colonies "and if a stop be put to our judicial proceedings I fancy the Merchants of G. Britain trading to the Colonies will not be among the last to wish for a Repeal of it."¹

It has been finally demonstrated that Parliament did possess the constitutional right to tax the American colonies; but as those colonies firmly believed this right to be non-existent and acted upon that belief to the limit of violently separating themselves from the British empire, George Washington's reasoning is to be analyzed in the light of actual results rather than those of academic argument.

The repeal of the Stamp Act drew from him this approval in a letter to Cary & Co., July 21, 1766: "The Repeal of the Stamp Act to whatsoever causes owing, ought to be much rejoiced at, for had the Parliament of Great Britain resolv'd upon enforcing it the consequences I conceive would have been more direful than is generally apprehended both to the Mother Country and her Colonies. All therefore who were Instrumental in procuring the Repeal are entitled to the Thanks of every British Subject and have mine cordially."

Both this letter and the one to Francis Dandridge are significant of the state of mind reached by Washington as regards Great Britain. It was already, unconsciously, an American mind, otherwise he would hardly have referred so casually to "The Parliament of Great Britain" as though it were an alien body, unconnected with America.

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CHAPTER XIX

BUSINESS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WESTERN COUNTRY

THE years between Washington's marriage and the outbreak of the Revolutionary War were busy and important ones from the standpoint of his personal fortune. His time was spent in attempting to systematize his plantation affairs and to develop his farming to the point of self-support and profit. His accounts show the many and varied activities of the Mount Vernon settlement, for in addition to the plowing, planting, sowing and reaping, there was the tobacco cultivation, stock-raising, cider-making, distilling, fruit-grafting, flour-making, fish-salting, meat-curing and packing. Boats were built and rented out, blacksmith-work, carpentry and other labor was sold or the artizans hired out, flour, fish, corn and other crops sold, in large and small quantities, and it is depressing to note the very large number of accounts where labor and supplies were furnished from Mount Vernon, that are balanced by the entry, "By loss." Among these may be noted the peculiarly dispiriting account with Robert Adam & Company which shows business transactions totaling over a thousand pounds, with a final balance due George Washington of £494:3:4, balanced by his manager, Lund Washington, in April, 1775, as "pd in paper money when it was good for nothing £322:2:0."

Of other difficulties encountered one was a disputed wheat contract with Carlyle & Adam, which drew from Washington a letter (February 15, 1767) which is too characteristic to be unnoticed. The merchants seem to have complained that Washington insisted on holding them to their contract and hinted that he was unnecessarily severe and strict: Washington wrote:

You say you have bought as large quantities of Wheat from others and lain longer in their debts than mine without paying Interest and without being threatened with a Suit. . . . I may take the liberty of remarking that tho it is no Inconvenience to one Man to lay out of

his money, it may be the ruin of another to do so; this then according to my conception of things is no fair way of reasoning. . . . How then am I to make remittances for Goods to Cloath a numerous Family, supply a House in various necessities, and support it in all its various expences? Have I any hidden resources do you imagine . . . Will the Merchts. send me these Goods without remittances? if they do, must I not expect to pay advanced prices for them? As Merchts. answer me. After keeping my Corrispdts. in Engld., Madeira, or elsewhere out of the promised remittances from this or that Genl. Court wd. they be satisfied do you think with my writg. thus; Messrs Carlyle and Adam who bought my Wheat and was to pay me upon delivery thereof, has done it but in part, and therefore you are disappointed; woud they I ask be content with this excuse? . . . These Gentlemen are plain, Simple, and obvious questions, meriting in my opinion different answers than those you have been pleased to give. But for Argument sake let us suppose that necessity is out of the question, and that I wanted my money to indulge my fancy in the purchase of anything which pleased my Taste, or which I conceived I wanted (and God knows I have losses enough in Negroes to require something where with to supply their places) have I not a right to call for my own engagd to me by solemn contract without giving offence? most assuredly I have, not all the Logick you are Masters of shall convince me to the contrary."

Carlyle & Adam had copied out the contract and held it several days before they signed it so that the matter appears to be but another of the evidences that George Washington was known to be a generous and accommodating individual. In this contract dispute with Carlyle & Adam it needs only a perusal of Washington's letter to them of February fifteenth to show that the Alexandria firm presumed upon Washington's easy-going nature. This was a mistake for, like many easy-going men, George Washington possessed unyielding tenacity and uncompromising strictness when he discovered an intent to presume upon his kindness. He ended his argument thus: "If I have wherewith to lend, freely will I lend it; but not have it detaind as a right, or as a matter of ill usage when asked for." Lend he freely did in youth, middle and old age, and his papers may be searched in vain for even slight evidence of stinginess, usury or parsimony.

CHAPTER XX

THE CANOE TRIP DOWN THE OHIO AND THE SOLDIERS' BOUNTY LANDS

THE biggest land enterprise in which Washington became interested was that of the Virginia soldiers' bounty lands. Dinwiddie's grant of lands for enlistment and services was lacking in definiteness and in the time that elapsed between his proclamation promises and an actual move in the matter, settlers had been gradually moving in upon the area to the westward of the Alleghenies and Fort Pitt, so that the chances of the Virginia regiment obtaining lands of any value were steadily diminishing. Washington, as colonel of the regiment, presented a petition to the Virginia Governor and Council, praying on behalf of the Virginia officers and men that the lands due them might be located in the somewhat indeterminate region known as the Ohio and upon the banks of that river. The petition was granted and two hundred thousand acres were allotted in such areas as did not interfere with the rights of previous settlers. This necessitated a location some hundreds of miles below Fort Pitt, and as a result few if any of the Virginia soldiers benefited by the bounty. The land was too far away from the settlements for the individual grantee to rent his small parcel successfully and no one cared actually to settle thereon, but sought to dispose of his holding for cash to the first bidder. It was this condition that Washington's business instinct foresaw as inevitable and it was one exactly similar to many, for the handling of which our so-called Captains of Industry to-day are admired. Concerning it Washington wrote to his brother Charles, January 31, 1770, to look out and purchase for him any of the bounty rights which might be offered for sale. This is one of the letters that has been held up as evidence of a grasping disposition in Washington and twisted into proof of his having taken unfair advantage of needy soldiers, but a careful reading of it shows nothing of this nature. Had Washington not advanced money out of his own pocket to meet the expenses incurred in pushing the claims of the Virginia soldiers for their

land grants, the affair would have collapsed and not an officer or private would have obtained a foot of land. The grant, when finally obtained, was so far away from the settled parts of Virginia that a great many officers and soldiers were glad to turn their claims into cash by selling their rights and having done with the matter.

At a meeting of the Virginia officers at Fredericksburg in August, 1770, to arrange for securing their titles to the land, Washington was elected their attorney to manage the business and, on October fifth, in company with Dr. James Craik, servants and baggage horses, he set out for the Red Stone settlement as the point of departure for the necessary exploring tour down the Ohio River, to locate these lands. Of this trip down the Ohio little has been told.¹ The stirring actions of the Revolutionary War came so soon thereafter that the frontier canoe journey has been largely overlooked. He was away from Mount Vernon nine weeks and one day, reaching home December first, after having traveled over five hundred miles.

Washington's diary record of this long canoe trip is a fascinating account of incidents, not the least of which is the note of a buffalo hunt, some fourteen miles up the Great Kanawha River.

On that hunt Washington evolved a different thought from that of the later American idea that buffalo were made to be slaughtered. Perhaps the taste of buffalo meat influenced him, or perhaps his utilitarian mind could not miss an apparent chance to experiment in the development of a native product. At any rate he conceived the idea of obtaining some buffalo calves for experimental breeding purposes and, a few years later, instructed James Cleveland, who carried out a parcel of Washington's indented servants in 1775, to settle a portion of his Ohio lands, to "try and buy me all the Buffalo Calves you can get and make them as gentle as possible. I would not stick at any reasonable price for them especially the Cow Calves, but I would like at least two Bull Calves for fear of accidents as I am very anxious to raise a breed of them." A buffalo cow was among the stock at Mount Vernon when Washington died. The attempt to settle the lands failed, through the inattention and knavery of the servants, and with it failed this first plan of the First American to develop an American beef animal. There seems to be something almost uncanny in the way in which George Washington touched upon nearly everything

distinctively American. Another of the surprising things to be noted about this canoe trip was Washington's judgment of distances. From Fort Pitt to Captening Creek, half-way of their journey, Washington guessed the distance to be one hundred and thirteen miles; the official pilot charts of the Ohio River show this distance to be one hundred and twelve miles and to have judged thus close, after a canoe journey of several days, shows with what exactness Washington's frontier observation had been trained.

Washington concluded that the land around the junction of the Ohio and Great Kanawha was about the best that could be obtained. He therefore marked out corners, or starting-points for surveys of the soldiers' lands, a mile or so above the mouth of the Great Kanawha, on both sides of that river down to the Ohio and land on both sides of the Ohio River above the mouth of the Kanawha.

Though his own land grant caused him enough trouble, Washington was plagued and bothered by some of the officers for whom he was doing the best he could in prosecuting the claims of all. As is usually the case where the expenses of an undertaking are to be shared pro-rata, a number of the claimants did not pay in their subscriptions and Washington was forced to advance his own money or see the entire enterprise fail. Some of this was later paid back to him but some he never received and the irritations of the affair drew from him one of the small number of sharp letters of his life. Lieutenant George Muse wrote a critical and complaining letter about his allotment of the bounty land and Washington answered him, January 29, 1774, with this stinging rejoinder:

Sir: Your impertinent Letter of the 24th. ulto., was delivered to me yesterday by Mr. Smith. As I am not accustomed to receive such from any Man, nor would have taken the same language from you personally, without letting you feel some marks of my resentment; I would advise you to be cautious in writing me a second of the same tenour; for though I understand you were drunk when you did it, yet give me leave to tell you, that drunkenness is no excuse for rudeness; and that, but for your stupidity and sottishness you might have known by attending to the public Gazettes, (particularly Rinds of the 14th. of January last) that you had your full quantity of ten thousand acres of Land allowed you.

The business was still in an unsettled state and after telling Muse of the situation and of his efforts to obtain the land for the soldiers, Washington wrote:

Since I find in what temper you are, I am sorry I took the trouble of mentioning the Land, or your name in a Letter, as I do not think you merit the least assistance from G:Washington.

CHAPTER XXI

SOME PERSONAL DETAILS—TASTES—APPEARANCE— AMUSEMENTS—BOOKS, WITH A TRIFLE ON CHARACTER

WASHINGTON fulfilled his political duties by attending each year the spring and fall sessions of the House of Burgesses, to which he had been successively elected since 1758. Socially, there were the Williamsburg and Annapolis races, the theater at both these towns and the dances, or balls, that were features of nearly every gathering. Washington was a consistent subscriber to the racing purses which the gentry of the day made up, and his cash account shows how often he carried the contributions of George William Fairfax, Colonel Burwell Bassett and other of his friends. Many hours were whiled away at the card table. Whist and Loo were favorites, but the somewhat complicated mathematics of Quadrille held a firm place in Washington's liking. There is record for the purchase of a backgammon board, and the number of packs of cards ordered from London induces the belief that the quality of the pasteboards could not have been very high in colonial times, or else that Washington disliked to handle soiled and frayed cards. At the beginning of the year he set aside about one pound for card play and in an account for the years 1772 through 1774 his card losses and gains balanced to the amount of £6:3:3 against him. He was evidently a steady, consistent, but not a brilliant player and, just as evidently, he played for pleasure and not for profit. Boat races are also to be noted as entering into his scheme of sports, and there is a dispiriting entry of several dozen of claret being furnished at such an event, as a loan to the gentleman who was managing the affair; but alas! this also is recorded as one of those loans which were never repaid. Washington was a good sportsman; his interest in and liking of everything in the nature of clean sport is too evident to be doubted. Fishing, hunting, both with shotgun and rifle, riding to hounds, horse-racing, boat-racing, bowling, billiards, card-playing, the list covers nearly every form of sport known in colonial times, and the fascination

which lotteries and raffles held for him has already been mentioned. Watch-raffles, college and land lotteries are noted, among which stands out one for land offered in New Jersey by Lord Stirling, before the Revolution, in which Washington drew one of the prizes.

Orders for the best London snuff indicate that for the decade preceding the Revolution Washington may have indulged in the habit, but the absence of purchases after that time shows that it was either a passing phase, like that of his pipe-smoking, or was merely a hospitality.¹ The pipes purchased, by the gross from London (there is but one order of tobacco from London, for the homegrown "sweet-scented" tobacco of his own make may have proved more to his liking), were the long-stemmed clay affairs which were retired in due course with the "neat paper Snuff box lined with tortoise-shell" of 1762. Nevertheless an unusual and appealing picture of Washington is disclosed by the justifiable inference that he sat around the Mount Vernon hearth with George Mason, George William Fairfax and other friends, puffing those long-stemmed, white-clay pipes.

He shaved himself, like most red-blooded Americans, and one set of his London-purchased razors had tortoise-shell handles. Twentieth-century shaving powder is not so distinctively original as thought, for shaving soap-powder and brushes were often ordered by George Washington from London in pre-revolutionary times.

It is possible to catch only glimpses of the personal side of George Washington up to the age of forty-six; indeed until he had reached the half-century mark, and had begun to loom upon the world as one of its great figures, few if any had taken the trouble to set down the facts we treasure to-day. Of course the French army officers, almost as soon as they arrived in America, began describing Washington, and these descriptions, some of them as early as 1778, are antedated by but one known, scant outline, by the Reverend Charles Henry Wharton, previously mentioned, and Washington's colonial aide Captain George Mercer, whose description of the Washington of 1760 is one of the best. The unquestionable sources of information in Washington's own expense accounts and letters bring a great many personal details into form and shape, and though the physical man does not stand out plainly, but is shadowy and dim at best, it is much more satisfactory than the imaginary exaggeration.

tions of the past and it has the flavor of real truth. Here is the picture: A tall spare man, large-boned; neat in person and dress, almost to fastidiousness. He wore no wig, but combed, powdered and dressed his own hair with careful attention, tied it in a queue and sometimes in a bag, and went frequently to the barber besides.

His clothes were of velvet, fustian, shalloon and cloth of blue (Washington wrote it "bleu" and "blew" in the early days) wine color, purple and for every-day wear sometimes a mixed pattern. There were jean suits also, which Washington presumably wore when engaged in the many farm tasks to which he often lent his own aid. His waistcoats were of fancy weaves, of various tones and colors, with gold or silver trimmings. Silk and ornamental garters with buckles of silver. Shoes, slippers, pumps with the orthodox silver buckles; riding boots of the best leathers and clogs (for which we now use rubbers), were the footwear, and always Washington was insistent that all of his shoes be broad-toed. He was opposed to the narrow-toe fashion of his day. Greatcoats of blue Duffield and the New Market cut were his protectors from inclement weather and one of his hunting coats was specifically noted as of a drab tone. At times a great cloth cape was worn instead of a greatcoat, and while the material of which his hats were made is known there is nothing very specific as to their shape. On dress or formal occasions the final touch is added to the tall, blue-eyed, velvet-clad figure in white silk stockings and silver-buckled shoon, by a hussar's sword-belt of red morocco with "a fine strong Silver pierced Boatshell two edge sword" with a "Silver and gold gripe." A gold-headed cane, engraved with his crest, was a substitute for the sword on occasions. A composite of the personal descriptions by some of those who recorded their impressions from 1760 to 1797² may be helpful. Spare, raw-boned and powerful, six feet two inches tall, well-developed muscles but rather flat-chested. Wide spaced eyes, heavy brows, high cheek-bones, dark brown powdered hair, a clear colorless skin which burned under the sun. A large mouth, but from the Houdon bust we know that it was not full-lipped; Mercer says it was firmly closed but from time to time disclosed some defective teeth (this as early as 1760). His eyes were blue, some said lackluster, but others that, when interested, they were keenly alive. William Sullivan recorded that at the age of sixty-five he was still erect and upstanding while an anonymous writer in 1790

stated that his smile "was extraordinarily attractive." Mercer, back in 1760, added the finishing touch by the statement that Washington was a splendid horseman, to which the expense accounts add the details of hogskin saddle and double bridle, surcingle and blue saddle cloth, worked with gold bullion, buckskin riding breeches and gloves.

Preferences in food delicacies are fairly well defined by the orders on London previously noted and the Virginia cash accounts. Before the Revolution bottled strong beer and porter were purchased by the hogshead, and in October, 1761, an order was placed for a "Fifty Gallon Still, with everything compleat The Worm and Pipe to very good." The distillery book of Mount Vernon is still in existence and from it, unassuaged curiosity may be gratified, though neither complete nor partial analysis of this record can do anything more than obtain additional details of one of the commonplace industrial activities of Mount Vernon.

The common notion that Washington was not much of a reader is, like many other ideas regarding him, considerably at variance with the fact. The books he bought before the Revolutionary War and the library he acquired after the war justify the belief that he read much more than is supposed and it is plain that the books he read to obtain information were digested with thoroughness.

Such works as Churchill's *Sermons*, which were upon the Lord's Prayer and Admiral John Byron's *Voyage around the World*, were not purchased merely for the sake of buying books. His book-plate, engraved on copper by a London engraver, was ordered in 1771 and three hundred impressions were struck therefrom. This was not a thing that would be thought of had Washington been indifferent to books.

In December, 1755, five months after Braddock's defeat, he ordered Humphry Bland's *Treatise on Military Discipline* and, prior to the Revolution, there is good reason to believe he possessed such works on military science as Clairac's *Field Engineer*, Saxe's *Plan for Remodelling the French Army*, Leblond's *Engineer*, Starrat's *Doctrine of Projectiles* and the various military treatises written by John Muller and published before 1770.

Twenty years after Braddock's defeat we find him advising Colonel William Woodford, of the Virginia Continentals, to fit himself the better for his duties as colonel by studying the latest edition of Bland. On July

29, 1757, in his general instructions to the captains of the regiment he recommended "in the strongest manner I can to you and your officers to devote some part of your leisure hours to the study of your profession." On May 21, 1758, he wrote to Major Andrew Lewis "at the same time permit me (as a duty incumbent on myself) to recommend in the strongest terms to you, the necessity of qualifying yourself (by reading) for discharging the duty of Major." These excerpts do not sound as though they came from a man unaccustomed to books. He began the Revolution with Thomas Hanson's *Prussian Evolutions*, eight copies of which he purchased in Philadelphia in May, 1775. He may have sent these back to Virginia to the militia companies who had honored him by electing him as their commanding officer; but he seems to have kept one copy.⁸ In December, 1774, he had ordered, through William Milnor in Philadelphia, from whom he had purchased all the military equipment for these militia companies, Webb's *Treatise*, as he described it, because he had been told that it dealt with military discipline which was, Colonel Washington well knew, an almost unknown thing among Americans. This book must have been a disappointment, for it was a work by Lieutenant Thomas Webb, of the British Army, on appointments and military honors.

His purchase of the latest edition of Smollett's *History of England* (in eleven volumes) in the latter part of 1762, is worth a thought in view of the political whirlpool into which the colonies were then drifting. It was almost as though Washington said: "Let me look at the way in which Great Britain expanded to her present empire and perhaps I can better understand why she is acting as she does toward America." Another purchase, *The New Duty of Man*, in December, 1764, has point to it. It is necessary to consider this purchase, a copy of which was also acquired by the staunch democrat, Thomas Jefferson. *The Whole Duty of Man* was first published in London about the year 1658 and went through many editions in London, Dublin, Oxford and Edinburgh down to 1838. It was reprinted in Williamsburg by William Parks in 1746 and later with the change of title. This is enough to settle the popularity of the book, which contains many maxims of a political tone, though the entire work is largely religious, being evidently the Established Church ideas which are attributed to Lady Pakington and the Archbishop of York. *The New Duty* starts with the concept that "Our *first* approach to God is by FAITH;

without which it is impossible to please God. Now faith is a firm belief of things at present not seen; a conviction upon the mind, of the truth of the promises and threatenings of God made known in the scriptures; of the certain reality of the rewards and punishments of the life to come." This is, practically, a complete description of George Washington's faith as recorded in his writings.

"A *second* duty to God is HOPE; which is a strong reliance and dependence upon the truth and goodness of the Lord for his performance of those things promised on his part." This too, closely resembles the principles laid down by Washington in his General Orders, as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, when exhorting and encouraging the soldiers to persevere in their efforts. The fifth duty was Trust in God and the sixth was Humility, both of which, as given, are not far removed from Washington's expressed ideas.

The second part of *The Whole Duty of Man* dealt with man's duty toward his neighbors and lays down many homilies on creditors, deceit in trust and "traffick" in fair dealing, false reports, censoriousness, scoffing and despising; the respect due to all men, charity, almsgiving, vain-glory, cheerfulness and melancholy, which, taken all in all, fit rather well with both George Washington's written ideas and recorded actions. It is claiming too much, of course, to insist that this volume was the pattern, or rules, upon which Washington shaped his principles and ordered his moral life, as many of his characteristics had already been demonstrated before he obtained the book; but it is not claiming too much to credit the work with having had an influence, just as it is impossible to escape the conviction that the old *Rules of Civility* had influence in shaping his juvenile thought.

Again it is from the cash accounts that we can check up on Washington's amusements, those at least for which he expended money, in addition to cards, billiards, horse-racing and other activities. The enthusiasm and enjoyment with which every opportunity was embraced to see the entertaining and unusual adds to the human touch, even the purchase of a parrot in 1773, for 6/, which we can hope was a good talker. In the month of June, 1770, Washington went to the theater three times; in May, 1771, he again went three times and that he enjoyed showing gallantry may be judged by an entry in his expenses at the Fredericksburg Fair: "By Treat-

ing the Ladies 4/"; but whether this treat was at the ball, the races or the theater is not stated. Then there are the entries that may be teased to demonstrate that George Washington was among the first to exhibit the earliest symptoms of that distinctly American enthusiasm for the circus, in the record that he paid to see "a Lyoness" in captivity and also for a sight of a "Tyger." Doubtless his generosity and tastes were known to the countryside, for a man who traveled with an elk for a show seemed to have been sure of a gratuity before he turned from the highway into the Mount Vernon gate. There was a school-house on the Mount Vernon estate, for which we have notes that new window glass was put in and a new chimney built in 1760-61. The Custis children, and presumably those of the neighborhood, the Poseys and others, were the scholars and doubtless these youngsters obtained a keen thrill from seeing the huge elk.

CHAPTER XXII

FOX-HUNTING—EDUCATION OF YOUTH—THE REVEREND JONATHAN BOUCHER—SOME STRAIGHTFORWARD LETTERS

BY FAR the most engaging pictures of the life at Mount Vernon are those of the fox-hunting days. Washington took keen delight in the headlong dash of riding to hounds and though his diaries record only the bare and sober facts of the hunts, sometimes several in the same week, these facts justify the color and verve of hard-riding, fence-jumping chases. The Mount Vernon pack of hounds were bred and trained with some care and from the kennels we catch another touch of the romance in Washington's make-up, for the names he gave the puppies would never have been chosen by an unromantic nature: Sweetlips, Chanter, Truelove, Singer, Dabster and Musick are some of the names that have a joyous lilt to them.

At rare intervals a fox was run down and taken alive, when it treed to escape the dogs, and when that happened the animal was brought back to Mount Vernon and later released to furnish another hunt. There is one unusual instance noted by Washington, of a closely pushed fox taking to a tree and, after a few minutes, falling out of his refuge, stone dead. The hunts lasted at times for hours and the hounds at rare intervals picked up the trail of a deer and followed that with as much enthusiasm as ever they did Reynard's. The heyday of the fox-hunting came before the Revolutionary War. After eight years in the saddle during that war, the zest of hard riding was not so keen as formerly, and after the Presidency Washington appears to have been too tired to ride to hounds. John Parke Custis rode to hounds with Washington but occupied more of his stepfather's care and attention along the lines of education and moral training than in the hunting field, and if his sister, Martha Parke Custis, whom Washington called "Patsy," helped largely in developing Washington's natural love for children, Jacky's juvenile headstrong nature trained his stepfather to some of the forbearance he later displayed toward the wilful adults in the Continental Congress and its army.

The two Custis children were tutored at Mount Vernon, though it is difficult to settle whether the Reverend Walter Magowan gave his lessons at the Mount Vernon mansion or at the school-house. It is only a guess that the neighboring children attended this school and that the Custis children were not the only scholars. After Mr. Magowan left Virginia for a visit to England, Jacky Custis was placed with the Reverend Jonathan Boucher, who conducted a school for young gentlemen at various places in Virginia and afterward in Maryland, near Annapolis. Young Custis was somewhat difficult to handle, inclined to resent advice or restraint, though he was fulsome in assurances and readily contrite when admonished for indiscretions. In his relations with his stepson Washington maintained a carefully guarded attitude, though he spoke plainly when plain speaking was needed and his experience with young Custis's education was a factor in arousing Washington's interest in the general problem of the education of youth. The fruits of that interest appeared in later years and were productive in several instances of help to deserving young men outside of his blood relationships. They were stated in the Farewell Address and found final practical expression in Washington's will which, regardless of the failure of the idea there outlined (for which failure Washington was in no wise responsible), was a nobly conceived educational vision, deserving of high rank in the intellectual history of the nation.

The Reverend Jonathan Boucher's correspondence with Washington concerning young John Parke Custis does not in any way prepare one for the captious sneer with which that self-sufficient clergyman disposed of his relations with Washington, in his autobiography penned some years later. The picture there drawn described Washington in far from flattering terms, which would need no notice were it not that the untruthful statements have furnished grist for the grinding by Washington's uninformed and self-appointed critics. There is an element of humor in the facts. As tutor to John Parke Custis, Boucher sent Washington long lists of books to be purchased, presumably for the use of Jacky, but consideration of the titles and number of these volumes, together with Jacky's age, makes it difficult to evade the suspicion that Boucher was thinking more of his own reading than of the actual necessities of his juvenile pupil. These ponderous lists of book purchases having been approved by Wash-

ington without question, it may be that the idea of a European tour with Jacky, the Custis estate meeting all the expense, appeared to have a chance of fulfillment. But this met with an unexpected check. Washington very politely and with common-sense logic declined to allow the capital of the Custis estate to be impaired by such a junketing tour, though he willingly granted the educational advantages of European travel. Then came the Revolutionary War, which separated Boucher from a comfortable living in Virginia, as a minister of the Established Church, and forced him back to England, because of his Toryism. This of itself was enough to sour the exalted egoism of such a man as Boucher, and George Washington, being the main figure in that revolution, was easily personified by the reverend gentleman as the arch conspirator who was responsible for the impairment of the Boucher fortune and prospects. But, though Boucher's published autobiography has been much quoted and referred to, George Washington has the last word. The record of Boucher's account stated in Ledger B, of the Washington Papers, shows that, by request, Washington paid sundry printer's bills in Williamsburg and New York City for Boucher and the account is balanced thus in Washington's writing: "By loss, Mr. Boucher having removed to England £4:10:0."

Of the youths who were helped or offered help by Washington, in obtaining an education, the earliest record that has so far come to light is the offer to William Ramsay, father of one of the later mayors of Alexandria. To him Washington wrote, January 29, 1769:

Having once or twice of late heard you speak highly in praise of the Jersey College, as if you had a desire of sending your Son William there (who I am told is a youth fond of study and instruction, and disposed to a sedentary life; in following of which he may not only promote his own happiness but the future welfare of others) I shou'd be glad, if you have no other objection to it than what may arise from the expence, if you wou'd send him there as soon as it is convenient and depend on me for Twenty five pounds this Currency a year for his support so long as it may be necessary for the completion of his Education. If I live to see the accomplishment of this term, the sum here stipulated shall be annually paid, and if I die in the meanwhile, this letter shall be obligatory upon my Heirs or Executors to do it according to the true intent and meaning thereof.

No other return is expected, or wished for this offer, than that you will accept it with the same freedom and good will with which it is made, and that you may not even consider it in the light of an obligation, or mention it as such; for be assur'd that from me it will never be known.

Another offer of a similar kind was made to Doctor Craik for his son, George Washington Craik, who later acted as a secretary to Washington during his Presidency. The three sons, Lawrence, John and Price, of his neighbor Captain John Posey, received educational assistance from Washington, the extent of which is disclosed in the expense accounts and it is an irony of fate that one of these boys should have been pitched upon by erotic-minded scandalmongers, as evidence of a Washington philandering. The educational assistance might have been a strong point in the manufactured scandal but for the fact that the other two boys must be accounted for on the same basis, and even charming little Milly Posey would logically have place in these whispers, except that George Washington can hardly be made responsible for the paternity of the entire Posey family. As an offset to this distasteful calumny it is pleasant to mention that at least one of the lads educated at the Free School at Alexandria wrote a boyish letter of thanks to Washington. "I have made bold to write these few lines to you to Thank you for my Education."¹ Three years later, 1792, young Weylie having developed and branched out into the study of Latin and Greek, Washington helped him further by purchasing the books he otherwise would have been unable to obtain. Washington's analysis of John Parke Custis's education furnishes us a good general idea of his thoughts on the education of youth: "In respect to the kinds and manner of his Studying," he wrote to Boucher, January 2, 1771, "I leave it wholly to your better Judgment; had he begun, or rather pursued his Study of the Greek Language, I should have thought it no bad acquisition; but whether to acquire this now, he may not forego some more useful branches of learning, is a matter worthy of consideration. To be acquainted with the French Tongue, is become a part of polite Education; and to a Man who has any prospect of mixing in a large Circle absolutely necessary. Without Arithmetic, the common affairs of Life are not to be managed. . . . Philosophy, Moral, Natural &c. I should think a

very desirable knowledge for a Gentleman; but as I said before, I leave the whole to your direction." And on June fifth, he wrote again: "I fear the progress he [Jacky] has made in Classical knowledge has of late been trifling; as I cannot discover that he is much farther in Latten than when he left Mr. Magowan, knows little Arithmetick, and is quite ignorant of the Greek language, which he has begun under the tuition of that Gentleman; and therefore, as well as from some inquiries I have lately made, apprehend, that he lacks that Attention which is necessary to advance him in his Studies; the Information which I have Just come to the knowledge of has filled me with a sincere concern not because of the expence attendg. his Living in Annapolis were it 4 times as great; but on account of the lost time which is never to be regained."

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CHAPTER XXIII

RESISTANCE TO PARLIAMENT—WASHINGTON'S REASONING

THE spring of 1774 in Virginia brought little evidence that the year was to see the beginning of the separation of the Old Dominion from the British Crown. George Washington's time was much occupied with pushing the matter of the soldiers' bounty lands forward to a conclusion, to arranging for tenants for his share of those lands and to developing a plan, which failed, of bringing over German Palatines for settlers.

The Virginia Burgesses met May fifth and Washington reached Williamsburg May sixteenth. When the passage of the Boston Port Bill and the sending of British troops to Boston became known in Virginia, on the first wave of resentment Washington rose to his feet and made a short and effective speech, described as the most eloquent one made in that Convention. "I will raise," said he, "one thousand men, subsist them at my own expense and march myself at their head for the relief of Boston."¹ If this speech is correctly reported it shows the intensity of the political revulsion in Virginia against the British assault upon American liberty and the highly emotional reaction of George Washington. Such a move would have meant bloodshed the moment these thousand men reached Boston. There seems small ground for doubting the truth of this anecdote and one of its values is the insight it gives into the intensity of the feeling that Great Britain's actions had aroused in America.

Robert Carter Nicholas moved and carried a resolution making June first, the day the Boston Port Bill was to go into effect, a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer. The Governor immediately dissolved the Burgesses, but the members, in defiance of the rebuke, reconvened themselves in the Raleigh Tavern, where they drew up an Association which, among other things, suggested calling a Congress of all the colonies to consider the situation.

When letters from the northern colonies were received a few days later,

recommending a union of the colonies, such burgesses as were still in Williamsburg (some twenty-five, among whom was Washington) met again on the call of Peyton Randolph, who had presided at the Raleigh Tavern meeting, and agreed upon a circular letter to all the burgesses calling for a meeting on August first, to settle upon a strict non-importation policy.

Governor Dunmore's action in dissolving the Burgesses seemed to have had no influence upon personal relationships, for on the day he issued the dissolution order Washington rode out with him "to his Farm and Breakfasted with him there" the next morning. On the twenty-seventh the ball given by the House of Burgesses to Lady Dunmore (to which Washington had duly subscribed one pound) was well attended and the affair passed off most pleasantly.

June tenth, Washington, still in Williamsburg, wrote to George William Fairfax in England, an account of matters and expressed his opinion of the political situation quite clearly:

The Ministry may rely on it that Americans will never be tax'd without their own consent that the cause of Boston the despotick Measures in respect to it I mean now is and ever will be considered as the cause of America (not that we approve their conduct in destroyg the Tea) and that we shall not suffer ourselves to be sacrificed by piece meals though god only knows what is to become of us, threatnd as we are with so many hoverg. evils as hang over us at present; having a cruel and blood thirsty Enemy upon our Backs the Indians, between whom and our Frontier Inhabitants many Skirmishes have happnd, and with whom a general War is inevitable whilst those from whom we have a right to seek protection and are endeavouring by every piece of Art and despotism to fix the Shackles of Slavery upon us.

Serious as the situation appeared, matters were moving faster than Washington realized. July fourteenth he was again elected a burgess. On the seventeenth Colonel George Mason came to Mount Vernon and together they went over the ground of the meeting of the Fairfax inhabitants, to be held at Alexandria the next day. Washington was chosen chairman of the meeting and Mason chairman of the committee appointed to

draft the resolves accepted later. These, known as the Fairfax Resolutions, are one of the well-known documents of the Revolution, and Washington was appointed on the committee directed to present the Resolutions to the Virginia Convention, which was to meet August first and which named Washington, among others, a delegate to represent Virginia in the First Continental Congress, to meet in Philadelphia in September.

While in Philadelphia Washington received and answered a letter from Captain Robert Mackenzie of the Forty-Third Foot, British Army, the same Mackenzie to whom he had written so diplomatically in the French and Indian War, and who now, after being wounded at Bunker Hill, wrote from Boston to his old Colonel. Washington's reply, October 9, 1774, is a straightforward exposition of his political attitude:

Permit me with the freedom of a friend (for you know I always so esteemed you) to express my sorrow, that fortune should place you in a service, that must fix curses to the latest posterity upon the diabolical contrivers, and, if success (which, by the by, is impossible) accompanies it, execrations upon all those, who have been instrumental in the execution.

I do not mean by this to insinuate, that an officer is not to discharge his duty, even when chance, not choice, has placed him in a disagreeable situation; but I conceive, when you condemn the conduct of the Massachusetts people, you reason from effects, not causes.

The New Englanders, Washington stated, were receiving daily proofs of Britain's intent to overturn their laws and violate their most valuable rights. Massachusetts had no intention of setting up an independent government; Mackenzie had been misled. Washington knew, he emphasized, from the Massachusetts leaders themselves, that such was the fact, but the people would not submit to the tyranny Britain was exercising and

give me leave to add as my opinion, that more blood will be spilt on this occasion, if the ministry are determined to push matters to extremity, than history has ever yet furnished instances of in the annals of North America, and such a vital wound given to the peace of this great country, as time itself cannot cure, or eradicate the remembrance of it.

Washington attended the First Continental Congress as a delegate from Virginia, but we have no information of his having served on any of the committees which drafted America's principles in addresses to the people of Great Britain and the inhabitants of Canada and the 1774 petition to the King; nevertheless his diaries show his daily attendance at the sessions and the extent to which he mingled with the other delegates, in his efforts to obtain a clear idea and understanding of the political situation. What his fellow delegates from Virginia thought of him is contained in a little scrap of paper signed by Richard Bland, Peyton Randolph and Benjamin Harrison. For one reason or another these Virginians left Philadelphia before the Congress adjourned, but before they left the city they signed this *carte blanche* authorization: "We depute Colonel George Washington to sign our names to any of the proceedings of the Congress." An exhibition of personal confidence not usually found among legislators, even in more peaceful times. A lighter touch is in Washington's expense accounts which note: "Oct. 30. By Cash won at Cards during my stay in Philadelphia £7," and a gratuity of £1 to the doorkeepers of Congress. He made sundry purchases in the city before returning to Mount Vernon, the more personal of which were a sword chain, which cost him £2, a pound of snuff, a razor strop and tooth-brush; he purchased the pamphlet print of Thomas Jefferson's *Summary View of the Rights of British America* for 3/9. Among the Washington manuscripts is a full copy, in Washington's writing, of the Petition to the King (October 26, 1774), which is an early example of a practise he followed throughout the remainder of his public life, in impressing important and essential facts upon his memory by writing them down. Patrick Henry's analysis of Washington in this First Congress has been quoted often: "Colonel Washington, who has no pretensions to eloquence, is a man of more solid judgment and information than any man on the floor."

When Washington returned from Philadelphia the Virginia feeling had become one of conviction that British troops might soon appear to garrison her seaport towns, the same as in Boston. At any rate the inhabitants thought it the part of wisdom to be prepared for an aggressive move on the part of Lord Dunmore. Various counties formed what were called independent companies of militia and Frederick, Fairfax, Prince Wil-

liam, Richmond and Spotsylvania each elected Washington to command and authorized him to procure for them the necessary equipment. This he tried to obtain through his friend William Milnor, in Philadelphia, and orders for muskets, colors, drums, powder and uniforms were speedily sent north. The history of these militia companies is not of importance but it so happens that the Fairfax company decided upon a uniform of buff and blue and thus has the honor of establishing what has come to be considered as the distinctive uniform of the Revolution, for Washington, with consistent regard for his native county and home-seat, wore the buff and blue throughout the war, and this fact more than anything else has fixed this combination as the Continental uniform. Actually the Continental Army did not succeed in obtaining sufficient clothing supplies to settle upon a uniform until the war was more than half over and although the ground color was blue or brown, where that cloth could be obtained, the various regiments had different colored facings, white, green, red, and a lighter blue as well as the buff.

The March session of the Virginia Legislature, which convened in Richmond in 1775, appointed Washington a member of its committee to prepare a plan for the encouragement of arts and manufacturing in the colony, and upon the one to plan for embodying, arming and disciplining the number of men necessary to put the colony in a state of defense. But the appointment which was to prove the most important of all was his election as a delegate to attend the Second Continental Congress, which was to meet in Philadelphia in May.

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CHAPTER XXIV

ELECTION AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF—SOME INSIDE POLITICS—MASSACHUSETTS LOSES CONTROL OF THE ARMY

WHEN George Washington rode through the Mount Vernon gateway on May 4, 1775, and turned his horse's head northward, his life as a Virginian ended and his career as an American began. Alexandria, Marlborough, Baltimore, Susquehannah, Wilmington and Chester was his route to Philadelphia, which he reached May ninth, and it is curious that in his first three days in the city he should have been entertained successively by three men who later were to cause him varying amounts of difficulty. The day he arrived in town he supped with Joseph Reed, a young and clever lawyer-politician, who became a power in the Pennsylvania government, but whose support of Washington was so toned down at times by self-interest as to make him an uncertain quantity. The second day he dined with Thomas Mifflin, who also became a power in the state government and allowed his personal ambition to involve him in the nefarious Conway Cabal. The third day he dined with young Doctor William Shippen who, later, by his prejudices and professional jealousy of Doctor John Morgan, nearly wrecked the Continental Army hospital organization.

The Second Continental Congress convened May tenth and Washington's diary mentions his attendance on committees on the seventeenth and eighteenth. These were for arranging for the protection of New York and the more important matters of devising means to obtain ammunition (a scarce article in the colonies), to estimate the amount of money to be raised for the common defense and to draw up a set of army regulations, for thus far had colonial opposition progressed to the authority of Great Britain. He had already fulfilled the mission entrusted to him by the Prince William County, Virginia, militia, in purchasing and arranging to forward to them one hundred and eighty pounds' worth of muskets and cartouch boxes.

Of Washington's feelings and thoughts during these hectic days in Congress, we have no hint until the last day of May, when he wrote to George William Fairfax in England and, after rendering an account of his stewardship of Fairfax's business affairs in Virginia, he gave the news of the fight at Concord bridge and the British retreat to Boston. It is plain that Washington wrote to assure Fairfax and the latter's acquaintances in England that the Americans could and would fight; for there had been much loose talk that the colonists would back down when they actually encountered the armed power of Britain. The concluding paragraph of Washington's letter shows his feeling at the outbreak of hostilities: "Unhappy it is though to reflect that a Brother's Sword has been sheathed in a Brother's breast, and that, the once happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched with Blood, or Inhabited by Slaves. Sad alternative! But can a virtuous Man hesitate in his choice?" Here is the romantic touch again and even the eight, long weary years of warfare that followed could not entirely obliterate it. Samuel Curwen wrote of dining with Washington at Joseph Reed's and describes him as "a fine figure and of a most easy and agreeable address." John Adams, in a letter to his wife (May twenty-ninth), noted that "Colonel Washington appears at Congress in his uniform, and, by his great experience and abilities in military matters, is of much service to us." If only Adams had been a bit more specific! Washington's reasons for wearing his Fairfax militia uniform can only be surmised. From his clothing orders sent to London, we can gather that a semi-military costume was his formal dress in Virginia. The Continental Congress, a gathering of the first men of all the colonies, appealed to Washington as the most important social as well as political gathering in America, and that he should accord that gathering the fullest honor in dress was but second nature to a Virginian. Then there was the romantic touch of this being a gathering of representative men of all America and there probably was, also, a little of the dramatic, a desire to impress the delegates to the Congress that war was not unlikely to be met with along the road they were traveling; but whatever Washington's reasons for wearing a uniform, he was not electioneering for the honor he was soon to receive. That he was willing to fight and that, if fighting was decided upon, he would expect to be recognized in a military capacity commensurate with his former rank in Virginia, is beyond doubt. It is

also beyond doubt that he shrank from the thought of fighting and directed all his energies to the political task of avoiding such a result.

The story of Washington's election as general and commander-in-chief of all the forces raised, or to be raised by the united colonies, has not been clearly told and, probably, never can be fully known, as much of the arrangement was by verbal agreement. But the entire domestic politics of the Revolution lies at the heart of that story and, ignorantly or purposely, the telling of it has been slurred over. Although the colonies were each and all aggrieved to the point of open resistance to the measures of the British Parliament, each colony's prime grievance was somewhat different from that of the others. The separate indictments in the Declaration of Independence cover, and designedly so, these principal grievances with an eye to their geographic-political value in cementing the colonies into a united resistance. There was no overwhelming sentiment of union in 1775, but rather this group of grievances overlaid with doubt and hesitations. John Adams well describes the situation in his letter to his wife Abigail, June seventeenth: "I have found this Congress like the last [the Congress of 1774]. When we first came together, I found a strong jealousy of us from New England and the Massachusetts in particular; suspicions entertained of design of independency; an American republic; Presbyterian principles, and twenty other things. Our sentiments were heard in Congress with great caution, and seemed to make but little impression; but the longer we sat the more clearly they saw the necessity of pushing vigorous measures. It has been so now. Every day we sit, the more we are convinced that the designs against us are hostile and sanguinary, and that nothing but fortitude, vigor and perseverance can save us." This mention of a religious factor by Adams has been ignored or lost sight of, but it is important to remember that religious prejudice could not and would not down and any study of George Washington's career, or the Revolutionary War, which was a part of that career, which ignores bigotry as an element therein, falls far short of a clear understanding of the movement. In the end of the same month in which John Adams wrote of this religious element to his wife, the New York Provincial Congress forwarded to its delegates in the Continental Congress, a "Plan and Proceedings respecting an Accommodation" with Great Britain. The reply of the delegates is illuminating: "We have," they answered, "unanimously

agreed to be silent on that Article in the Plan of Accommodation which asserts *That no earthly legislature or tribunal ought or can of Right interfere or interpose in anywise howsoever in the religious ecclesiastical concerns of the Colonies.* As the Inhabitants of the Continent are happily united in a political Creed, we are of Opinion that it would be highly imprudent to run the Risque of dividing them by the Introduction of Disputes foreign to the present Controversy," and then the New York delegates added the sane observation, "We are . . . all concurring in a Desire of Burrying all Disputes on ecclesiastical points, which have for ages no other Tendency than that of banishing Peace and Charity from the World."¹ Unfortunately all of the American patriots were not so sanely level-headed as Lewis Morris, Philip Livingston, James Duane, John Jay and the others who signed this reply to the New York Legislature. Washington was aware of the existence of this prejudice and had seen, long before most men, the necessity of keeping that prejudice entirely out of the struggle. It was, in his mind, one of the discordant and dangerous obstacles to the victory for liberty and he ignored it where he could and fought it where it could not be ignored. His steady adherence to the cause of liberty and refusal to be swayed by anything that might jeopardize that cause was what saved America, for only Washington's steadfast fortitude was deemed strong enough to support the fabric which French statesmanship was willing to build upon America, before fitting her into the world edifice which was then being modeled. It was fortunate for America that she was a factor that could be used upon the chess-board of European politics and though she did not clearly see or understand that she was only a pawn and of small consequence, America's independence, just then, was a valuable element in the European game regardless of whether it was good for America to be independent or not.

Congress, through what John Adams called the imbecility of sending a second petition to the King, was doubtful and hesitating, when it should have been positive and quick. "Debates and motions without end" embarrassed everything and the militia besiegers of Boston found themselves in an unsupported and unsupportable position, with no arms, provisions, supplies or pay in sight. Adams's account, written years after the events, is not above suspicion as a prejudiced presentation of facts, but it is one of the important surviving records. The necessity of the support of all

the colonies, through the Congress, for the troops besieging Boston was evident, yet all the efforts of the New England delegation to obtain that support encountered opposition and delay from three groups, however vaguely defined, the first of which wished to delay everything until the fate of the petition to the King could be known; the second or ultra-conservatives, who feared that a purpose of independency was really behind every move, and the third, or southern group (which Adams claimed opposed the northern or New England group) who suspected a New England army under a New England general and who wanted George Washington appointed commander-in-chief. In this last Adams seems to be recording more of his later knowledge of the internal political intrigues in Congress than an exact contemporaneous record of what was apparent in 1775. That there was a southern group and that the Virginia delegates were powerful therein is true, so true that Adams forgets to record the herculean efforts made by himself and his cousin Samuel to secure the support and friendship of the Lees of Virginia, as a means of neutralizing this southern strength and so maintaining Massachusetts' control of events. These efforts were completely successful, with the unexpected result that so many obstacles were interposed in the path of liberty as to nearly wreck that desired end.

John Hancock, nursing an ambition to become commander-in-chief, was so dazzled by his egotism and dream of high military command, that he was totally unable to perceive his unfitness for the position. But Hancock was cordially disliked by both John and Samuel Adams, partly because his political influence was an obstacle to the Adamses, for Hancock was not alone in his ambitious dreams. Adams, with engaging satire, recounts that "The Apostolical reasonings among themselves, which should be greatest, were not less energetic among the saints of the ancient dominion [Virginia] than they were among us of New England." He claims that some of the Virginians were against the appointment of Washington and particularizes Edmund Pendleton as "very full and clear against it." But the date of the writing of Adams's Autobiography, as previously mentioned, raises the question of Adams's memory being more influenced by his own later political prejudices than by a clear recollection of the details of the happenings in the Congress of 1775. His memory of the Declaration of Independence, an even more important matter than the

appointment of General George Washington, has been proved unreliable.

But the candidates for the important position of commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary Army were few. Then, as now, it was not possible to obtain agreement upon unknown men. Congress was to appoint and Congress really knew only Colonel George Washington, who sat with it. There was no Virginian, Carolinian, Marylander, Pennsylvanian, New Yorker or New Englander whose name as a soldier was so well-known to every delegate in Congress. Israel Putnam, of Connecticut, was the only name other than Washington's which did not have to be explained to Congress and even his was but a name against the physical presence of the Virginia Colonel. Then too Connecticut (Putnam's state) and Silas Deane had already highly offended Massachusetts by anticipating the Bay State's expedition against Ticonderoga. General Artemas Ward was already in command before Boston, but his and other Massachusetts names, such as Gridley's, Thomas's and Heath's, were ruled out because it was evident to Adams and his group that if Massachusetts insisted upon managing the fighting against the British in Boston, the other colonies would be likely to consider it a purely local outbreak and leave Massachusetts to finish by herself the war which she alone had begun. The other colonies, not yet united nor keen for bloodshed, took the common-sense position that if the Revolution was to be universal and they were to furnish supplies and men, those supplies and those men would not be placed wholly under the control of Massachusetts. It was therefore not only a wise political expedient for the Bay State to exert itself to carry the election of a southern commander-in-chief, but it was a matter of self-preservation. The gesture of union thus made was well worth any New England sacrifice and John and Samuel Adams seem to have been the prime movers toward this result. It is conceded to have been John Adams's handling that brought about the nomination of George Washington by Thomas Johnson, of Maryland; Adams is the authority for the statement that Johnson proposed Washington's name. A final period is put to the record by Eliphalet Dyer, from Connecticut, who wrote Joseph Trumbull, two days after Washington's election: "It removes all jealousies, more firmly cements the Southern to the Northern, and takes away the fear of the former lest an Enterprizing eastern New England Genll. proving Successfull, might with his Victorious Army give law to the

Southern or Western Gentry. this made it absolutely Necessary in point of prudence."

How much of all this clash of opinion was known to Washington is uncertain, but that he was well aware of the divergent elements in Congress is perfectly plain from his writings, and it is also plain that George Washington was the one man who did not spend time scheming and planning to build up a Washington party in Congress. Instead he pinned his faith to the righteousness of the cause of liberty. Supremely confident that Divine Providence approved and supported every struggle to obtain that liberty, he could not feel that political intrigue was needed as a further aid.

On June 15, 1775, George Washington was unanimously elected by the Continental Congress to command its armies. Adams recounts that as soon as Washington realized that Adams's speech referred to him, he hastily left the chamber. His diary and accounts are quite prosaic as to this day. He purchased "a Tambour worked pattern for a waistcoat" at £2:5:0, dined at John Burns's tavern "in the Field and spent the Eveng. on a Committee," which was the committee for drafting rules and regulations for the government of the army, the results of which were ordered published by Congress, June twentieth. The next day, June sixteenth, being notified by the President of Congress of his election, he replied from the floor:

Mr. President: Tho' I am truly sensible of the high Honour done me in this appointment, yet I feel great distress from a consciousness that my abilities and Military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important Trust: However, as the Congress desires I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I Possess In their Service for the Support of the glorious Cause: I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their Approbation.

But lest some unlucky event should happen unfavourable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every Gentn. in the room, that I this day declare with the utmost sincerity, that I do not think myself equal to the Command I am honoured with.

As to pay, Sir, I beg leave to Assure the Congress that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to have accepted this

Arduous employment [at the expence of my domestic ease and happiness] I do not wish to make any profit from it: I will keep an exact Account of my expences; those I doubt not they will discharge and that is all I desire.²

An exact account of these expenses he did keep and Congress duly discharged them; that was all he desired and all he received for eight years of grueling labor. The keeping of these accounts was not nearly so simple as it seems. Each colony had its own currency system and the exchange rate varied between them all. Congress adopted a "lawful" scale of value, but this did not make easier the calculation. When Washington was in Massachusetts that colony's currency prevailed; in New York the York value was used; in Pennsylvania, in Maryland and in Virginia, these values had to be calculated along with the "lawful," so that Washington's accounts state a double amount of different totals for his expenditures. In the hurry and confusion of the start of things, Washington forgot to enter many expenses and some he did not set down because he was unable to decide that they were official. He started from Philadelphia to take command of the army at Cambridge with about six hundred pounds of his own private funds and the first official purchase recorded is that of five horses; then came a light phaeton and harness, saddle, maps, field-glasses, etc.

Three days after his election, Washington wrote to Martha Washington a letter often quoted, but seldom analyzed, though it contains a great deal of the real George Washington:

As it has been a kind of destiny, that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose. . . . It was utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment, without exposing my character to such censures, as would have reflected dishonor upon myself, and given pain to my friends. This, I am sure, could not, and ought not, to be pleasing to you, and must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem.³

To Burwell Bassett he wrote, June nineteenth, that he could answer but for three things: "A firm belief in the justice of our Cause, close attention in the prosecution of it, and the strictest Integrity."

Washington made no allusion to God in his speech of acceptance, an omission which marks the sincerity of the man more than any mention could have done, nor did he do so in his letter to his younger brother nor his still younger stepson, John Parke Custis; but to his wife and to his warm friend, Burwell Bassett, he did not hesitate to state his dependence upon the higher power and his hope for support therefrom.

On June twenty-fifth Washington set out from Philadelphia for Cambridge, with Joseph Reed, Thomas Mifflin and others. Their arrival at New York created a peculiar situation. The newly appointed royal Governor, William Tryon, was due to arrive that same day, and with a large loyalist population and patriots who had not, as yet, developed a robust brand of Americanism in the cause of liberty, some awkwardness was apparent. But chance helped out the situation. A dinner at the public expense, engineered by George Clinton, was tendered to Washington who immediately thereafter resumed his journey toward Boston, and the patriots who had managed an enthusiasm for the free dinner then rushed to the Battery in time to cheer vociferously the arrival of the British royal Governor.

The lukewarmness of the New Yorkers could hardly have escaped Washington's observation, and that he exercised restraint in his public utterances is evident from the dry response he made to the almost impertinent address of the New York Convention, presented to him at the public dinner. In that address the New Yorkers displayed that absurd nervousness of finding a possible dictator in Washington, while preserving an apathetic attitude toward the actual dictator (the British King) then astride their necks. In a clever mixture of words they hinted the need of "sure pledges, that he [Washington] will faithfully perform the duties of his high office [of commander-in-chief] and readily lay down his power when the general weal requires it." It should be observed that this last provides a loop-hole to recall the Commander-in-Chief, even before liberty had been gained, if perchance it appealed to the people (in this case the people of New York) to do so. Washington's reply contains a rebuke worth remembering: "When we assumed the Soldier," he wrote, "we did not lay aside the Citizen; and we shall most sincerely rejoice with you in that happy hour when the establishment of American Liberty, upon the most firm and solid foundation shall enable us to return to our Private

Stations in the bosom of a free, peaceful and happy Country." This reply may properly be paraphrased as "My dear, only half-patriotic New Yorkers, I will resign when the entire country gains its liberty, regardless of what New York may think."

He reached Cambridge, took formal command of the army besieging Boston July third and issued his first General Orders. The parole password for the day was "Lookout" and the countersign was "Sharp." In the next day's orders he issued the first of his preachments for union and cooperation in this wise: "The Continental Congress having now taken all the Troops in the several Colonies . . . into their Pay and Service. They are now the Troops of the UNITED PROVINCES of North America; and it is to be hoped that all Distinctions of Colonies will be laid aside; so that one and the same Spirit may animate the whole." Vain hope! Almost immediately the difficulties of rank forged to the front. Major-General Artemas Ward and his friends did not relish his displacement from the chief command, which he had been exercising, though it must be said to Ward's credit that he did nothing to complicate the situation by any display of resentment. The story of the selection of the southern Commander-in-Chief filtered back to Massachusetts and served only as a gathering spur to natural geographical prejudice, though at first the matter was accepted more or less gracefully.

The situation was curious. John Adams's description, previously quoted, of the suspicions entertained by middle and southern colonies of New England's Presbyterian principles fails to mention that these were more than balanced by the New England suspicions of the Established Episcopal Church principles of Virginia; so that the political controlling forces in Massachusetts were in as distinct an attitude of suspicious neutrality as were those of New York or Virginia.

The control of the purchasing and supply departments passed out of the hands of the Massachusetts organizations and Massachusetts merchants along with the control of the army and, although Washington made changes slowly and with care, it was inevitable that uneasiness and antagonism should be aroused. The institution of discipline and authority where such things were practically unknown aroused resentments. That they were absolutely necessary if military success was to be obtained, requires no demonstration; but Stephen Moylan's analysis of the conditions

he encountered in fitting out the Continental armed vessels, conveys some faint idea of the difficulties Washington encountered: "There is one reason," he wrote to Washington, October 24, 1775, "and I think a substantial one, why a person born in the same town or neighborhood, should not be employed on public affairs of this nature in that town or neighborhood; it is, that the spirit of equality which reigns through this country will make him afraid of exerting that authority necessary for the expediting his business; he must shake every man by the hand, and desire, beg, and pray, do brother, do my friend, do such a thing; whereas a few hearty damns from a person who did not care a damn for them, would have a much better effect." Yet Washington understood; he sympathized with the very men whom he had to subdue to discipline and tractability. A loose organization of about sixteen thousand men, spread over a semicircle of six or seven miles, from Roxbury to Winter Hill, with hastily constructed redoubts, scattered along the line at points which did not appeal to Washington, and this organization had to hold at bay twelve thousand British troops, safely barracked in Boston, the center of the semicircle, protected by strong works and flanked by a strong British squadron. It was a difficult task.

The men over whom Washington assumed command had rushed forward under the fighting impulse, engendered by the news of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill; but they were not bound to serve for any specific time and most of them could march off home in three or six months, which most of them did. There were no uniforms, other than the variegated militia costumes and few companies could boast completeness in these. The arms were as variegated as the uniforms, and many of them were the personal property of the men who carried them. There was an almost complete lack of artillery and the supply of powder was infinitesimal. A prime difficulty arose almost at once by the objections of the officers and men to being put under the control of the Continental Congress. The Governor of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts delegates to Congress, seeing the inevitable collapse of the revolution, moved heaven and earth to persuade the other colonies to make the cause a national one and, after accomplishing this, the rank and file of the Massachusetts citizenry forthwith objected to the very thing their representatives had maneuvered so strenuously to obtain. Still more strange, many and various reasons were

gradually discovered by Samuel and John Adams and other influential New England citizens, first for approving and then for adopting this attitude of protest. The reasons for this about-face development varied with the individual; but, so far as the Continental Congress was concerned, the Massachusetts delegates, with a few from the other New England colonies, gradually coalesced into what may best be described as the party of the opposition.

The Massachusetts Provincial Congress presented Washington with an address on his arrival in Cambridge and in his reply he struck the dominant note of his career as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Armies, that of personal humility in the face of his tremendous task and his need of assistance from all patriotic men. The duties of my station, he wrote, "are so complicated and extended that I shall need the assistance of every good man and lover of his country." More than any other man and well in advance of every other man, he had begun to suspect that there could be no turning back in the path the colonies were treading and that the most important of all things was a firm political union. His General Orders for July 4, 1775, the day after he took command of the troops, stressed the necessity of discipline as well as that of union, previously noted; forbade cursing, swearing and drunkenness and required and expected that all officers and soldiers not on duty would attend divine service. Cleanliness being next to godliness, the orders were strict for the officers to see that the men were neat and clean; but the religious note is worthy of study, though it eludes complete analysis. That the Episcopalian Virginian should think it needful to call God and Heaven to the attention of the Puritan is an interesting point; outside of the bearing this had upon George Washington's own religious ideas and that physical cleanliness was also insisted on not only pictures the camp and Washington's instinctive repulsion from offensive conditions, but that his French and Indian War experiences were well remembered. He confidentially informed Lund Washington at Mount Vernon that the New Englanders "are an exceedingly dirty and nasty people."⁴ July fourteenth a stringent order on camp sanitation and hygiene was issued; ten days later the "abominably filthy and dirty" main guard-room was scored and on August first, a "camp colour man" was appointed in each company whose sole duty it was to see that the company camp was kept clean. The diffi-

culties encountered by Washington in his endeavors to bring the army into something approximating a military organization can not be appreciated easily to-day. Compared even with the old Virginia regiment of the French and Indian War, the troops around Boston were lacking in the first rudiments of military understanding. It took Washington a week to get proper returns of the strength of the forces, when any well-organized army could have furnished them in an hour or two. There was petty thievery among the soldiers, the sentries were slack in stopping persons at the lines and a practise of enticing soldiers to desert from one organization to enlist in another, and so swell the recruiting record of men where obtaining a commission depended upon the number of men raised, was prevalent. It brought a threat of severe punishment and this threat is one of the evidences of Washington's complete understanding of the conditions, which would not have been tolerated in any military organization other than the strange army he commanded. It sounds incredible that Washington felt it unwise to inflict summary punishment for high military crimes and misdemeanors and, instead, merely issued warnings and threats of punishment; but the situation was peculiar and only a man who could see clearly the ultimate need for the ultimate end could have succeeded. With the prejudice of the troops against him, no recruiting authority, no recruiting money nor recruiting regulations, he had no means of filling the place of those he might dismiss, or who might desert on being disciplined by a southern Commander-in-Chief. A week after taking command, the general orders proclaimed the appointment by Congress of Horatio Gates, formerly a major in the British Army, as a brigadier and adjutant-general of the Continental Army. An ex-officer of the British Army was usually seen by the colonials as wearing a halo of super-ability and military knowledge, and one of the heavy handicaps to the American arms, at the beginning of the war, was this colonial idea of the prowess of the Red-coats.

Gates was not the man to let his halo fade, but rather was continually polishing it until it shone with a false brilliance. From the moment of his arrival at Cambridge he cultivated in person and by correspondence the important men in Massachusetts, and by virtue of his office of adjutant-general, he could make the needful approaches without incurring a suspicion of self-aggrandizement. He had a charm of manner and address

when he pleased, and succeeded in a short time in strongly intrenching himself in the good graces of John and Samuel Adams, James Lovell, Elbridge Gerry and other New Englanders. Perhaps, thus early, the Massachusetts element was already predisposed to accept any officer of high military rank, other than the Commander-in-Chief; but in the beginning this was, doubtless, without conscious purpose. The glamour of the English was, of course, as effective in Massachusetts as elsewhere and Gates would not have been Gates had he ignored such an opportunity of expanding his importance.

The military situation at Boston was settled in large measure before Washington arrived. Bunker Hill had been fought before he left Philadelphia, and the Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island troops had established their lines and built their crude earthworks before he reached the scene of conflict. In writing to Congress, July tenth, Washington reported that a council of war had determined that these works should be held and defended as long as possible. "The Discouragement it would give the Men and its contrary Effect on the Ministerial Troops thus to abandon our Incampment in their Face, formed with so much Labour and expence; added to the certain Destruction of a considerable and valuable extent of Country and the uncertainty of finding a place in all respects so capable of making a stand are leading reasons for this Determination. At the same time we are very sensible of the Difficulties which attend the Defence of Lines of so great Extent, and the Dangers which may ensue from such a Division of the Army." He wrote to Richard Henry Lee with greater freedom, this same day: "I should not, I think have made choice of the present posts, in the first instance, although I believe the communication between the town and country could not have been so well cut off without them; and, so much labour has been bestowed in throwing up lines and making redoubts; as Cambridge, Roxbury and Watertown would be immediately exposed to the mercy of the enemy, were we to retreat a little further into the Country; as it would give a general dissatisfaction to this colony, dispirit our own people, and encourage the enemy, to remove at this time to another place; we have for these reasons resolved in council to maintain our ground if we can." And this was a fair description of what Washington had to contend with throughout the war. Political expediency was a factor in nearly every

military problem he had to solve and, more often than not, he was forced to accept conditions brought about by other men and to do the best he could in rectifying the mistakes made by others before he could make the first move of his own toward success. This condition is usually completely forgotten by those who enjoy belittling Washington's military ability.

The siege lines around Boston was the first instance; Long Island and New York was the second and the battle-field of Monmouth was yet another.

The letter of July tenth to Congress is a dreary catalogue of needs; dreary because the needs were those which should have been thought of and provided for by either Massachusetts or Congress before it was necessary for Washington to point them out.

Even a superficial reading of Washington's letters and orders make clear the fact that he not only had to fight for the liberty of America with his army, but that he had to plan, organize and obtain supplies of all kinds for that army with a minimum of assistance from those who should have furnished a maximum. There were no engineers, worthy of the name, no artillerymen, no clothing, no quartermaster-general, no mustering machinery, a scarcity of arms, very little powder. This last, of course, was the most important of all supplies and though the British undoubtedly received a hint of this, despite Washington's efforts to conceal it, the memory of Bunker Hill was too vivid in Boston to justify a major action on a report which might prove to be intentionally false. It was half a year before Washington felt he had a sufficient supply to justify the final move which compelled the British either to attack his lines or evacuate the town. Next to the lack of powder was an abysmal lack of responsibility and discipline. So small was the understanding of military necessity that sentries on duty would casually quit their posts to return to their quarters to get something to eat.⁵ They carried on conversations with the British sentries and from being loose and irregular in some ways, they were overly strict in others and would frequently halt the Commander-in-Chief and other general officers, who would have to wait the arrival of the officer of the guard to be identified. Sometimes this officer, not knowing the generals, was also unable to identify them which, while humorous at times, was at others exceedingly irritating, and it is not at all certain that this identification difficulty was unintentional but a method of showing these outsiders that they were not such big-wigs after all.

CHAPTER XXV

RESIGNATION OF OFFICERS—DISCIPLINE AND POWDER— TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

LACK of uniforms and lack of cloth from which to make them, made it necessary to adopt a makeshift scheme and Washington announced, in General Orders, July 14, 1775, that the majors and brigadier-generals would wear a pink ribbon across their breast, between their coat and waistcoat; the Commander-in-Chief, in order to conform to the practise, would wear a light blue ribbon. For this added touch to his Fairfax County uniform¹ Washington paid three shillings, four pence. The aides-de-camp were designated by green ribbons.

The appointment of general officers from Massachusetts and Connecticut, under the control of Congress, bid fair to become an "apparent Danger of throwing the whole Army into the utmost Disorder." Washington delayed filling up the blank commissions entrusted to him by Congress until he could learn the desires of that body in the matter. He had no "private Attachments; every Gentleman in Appointment was a Stranger to me, but from Character."² General Spencer left the army in disgust at Putnam's promotion (though he later thought better of it and returned), General Thomas intended to resign, but on receiving Washington's letter of July twenty-third, he too changed his mind. This letter is such a clear presentation of Washington's idea of what constituted patriotism that it deserves careful reading.

No general officer, wrote Washington, could resign at that critical time without fatal consequences to the cause and his own reputation. In wars of empire and ambition an officer could insist on punctilios, but this American war was a defense of all that was valuable in life "and every post ought to be deemed honorable in which a Man can serve his Country."

It was an unusual letter in every respect and it is not surprising that Thomas withdrew his resignation after receiving it.

The fundamental cause of all the dissatisfaction among the Massa-

chusetts officers radiated of course, from Washington's superseding Major-General Artemas Ward in the high command and, the situation at Cambridge is plainly pictured in Washington's letters to Congress: "Next to the more immediate and pressing Duties of putting our Lines in as Secure a State as possible, attending to the Movements of the Enemy, and gaining Intelligence, my great Concern is to establish Order, Regularity and Discipline, without which our Numbers would embarrass us and in case of an Action, general confusion must infallibly ensue."³

One step toward establishing this order he took by arranging the army into three divisions, but the application of this plan had to wait until the slow-moving Congress completed the arrangement of the officers. So pressing a matter as a military chest, with a supply of ready cash at headquarters and the appointment of a paymaster-general lagged until Washington urged it a second time. These and dozens of other things like desertions, embezzlements, officers absent without leave and men wandering away from camp, slowness of reports, random firing of muskets and finally the making of English deserters drunk before they could be examined by officers, were but some of the many irritations. The slowness of the officers in making reports and the inexactness of these reports when made was more serious. Because of this the true state of the powder supply was concealed from Washington for some time and when the actual facts were finally discovered the shock to him was great. He immediately wrote emphatic, but cautiously worded letters to the various New England Governors, urging the forwarding of every pound of powder obtainable. The need was so pressing that on hearing of a supply of British powder being at Bermuda Washington urged Rhode Island and then Connecticut to send ships to seize it. Again there were the usual delays and by the time the first ship reached the island the powder had been removed.

A difference in the number of men forming a regiment caused another trouble. The Massachusetts regiments were the largest, but the very simple expedient of reducing the strength and increasing the number of regiments could not be adopted, because the Massachusetts men had the privilege of electing their own officers and refused to serve if any new arrangement would put them under different commanders. The many other difficulties which Washington referred to Congress, influenced that body to send a committee to headquarters to investigate and report. Benjamin

Franklin, Benjamin Harrison and Thomas Lynch were the members chosen and they repaired to Cambridge early in October. Before they arrived the Commander-in-Chief had to protest vigorously to Massachusetts of the desertions among her troops, to New York against her citizens sending supply ships of provisions to the British at Boston, and to the army in general at the great number of soldiers claiming to be sick and staying in the hospital under such claim. Then came the discovery that officers were endeavoring to make financial profit out of their positions, and Washington let loose a blast of righteous anger that there could be "Officers, who lost to every sense of honor and virtue, are seeking by dirty and base means, the promotion of their own dishonest Gain, to the eternal disgrace of themselves, and Dishonour of their country."*

To his kinsman, Lund Washington, he was more outspoken:

The People of this government have obtained a Character which they by no means deserved; their officers generally speaking are the most indifferent kind of People I ever saw. I have already broke one Colo. and five Captains for Cowardice and for drawing more Pay and Provisions than they had Men in their Companies; there is two more Colos. now under arrest and to be tried for the same offences; in short they are by no means such Troops, in any respect, as you are lead to believe of them from the accts. which are published, but I need not make myself Enemies among them, by this declaration, although it is consistent with truth. I dare say the Men would fight very well (if properly Officered).

In the General Orders of August twenty-second there is a delicious castigation of the Puritan by the Virginia Established Churchman:

The General does not mean to discourage the practice of bathing whilst the weather is warm enough to continue it, but he expressly forbids any person doing it, at or near the Bridge in Cambridge, where it has been observed and complained of, that many Men, lost to all sense of decency and common modesty, are running about naked upon the Bridge, whilst passengers, and even Ladies of the first fashion in the neighbourhood, are passing over it, as if they meant to glory in their shame: The Guards and Centries at the Bridge, are to put a stop to this practice for the future.

There were minor irritants, though in addition to them he was forced to listen to idiotic suggestions from influential civilians such as Josiah Quincy and Joseph Palmer, as to ways and means of attacking the British. He had to write careful letters of thanks for these suggestions, explaining why the plans could not be carried out, in such a way that the tender sensibilities of officious civilian geniuses were not offended. His failures to achieve complete success in this may account in some measure for the general lack of enthusiasm in the Bay State over Washington, which has been noticeable, at times, even since the Revolution.

Washington's side of the matter is found in his letter to John Augustine Washington, July 27, 1775: "My life has been nothing else (since I came here) but one continued round of annoyance and fatigue; in short no pecuniary *recompence* could induce me to undergo what I *have*, especially as I expect, by shewing so little *courtenance* to irregularities and *public abuses* to render myself very obnoxious to a greater part of these People."

CHAPTER XXVI

CANADA—AND RELIGION

THE attempt to add Canada to the revolting American colonies involved Washington in unexpected ways and exerted most peculiar and unfortunate influences upon the struggle. Canada never for a moment was really involved, but the Canadian movement, so-called, operated in far-reaching impulses upon measures entirely dissociated with the movement. It began in the Congress of 1774, which then affected Washington not a whit, and it died an unmourned death in the final struggles of the infamous Conway Cabal in 1778, leaving behind it a legacy of embarrassing and irritating claims for services and damages that in some instances mulcted the United States financially and in others left disagreeable memories of a broken national faith. The bumptious tone, the tactless and covert threat in the Letter to the Inhabitants of Quebec, of October, 1774, was the first move of the American colonies toward an alliance with the Canadians. The text of this, after the wild outburst in the colonies over the Quebec Act, was not apt to inspire confidence in a nationality like the French-Canadian. In the Second Continental Congress, 1775, the situation had altered; it was now something like a drowning man catching at every straw; the tune had changed and the letter of Congress, in May, to the Oppressed Inhabitants of Canada was almost pleading in tone. The legacy of doubt and distrust engendered by these performances confronted Washington when the first definite move of a military expedition against Canada was made. After resolving against the setting on foot of any punitive expeditions by individual colonies, Congress took the first step by authorizing General Schuyler to use his judgment in seizing St. John's, Montreal, or any other part of Canada. It was September before the matter could be advanced much further. Like any other good soldier, Washington had considered Canada in viewing the entire military situation and had mentioned to Schuyler, when on his way to Cambridge, the advantage of obtaining the best information of the temper and disposition of the

Canadians "that a proper line may be mark'd out to conciliate their good Opinion, or facilitate any future Operation."¹

"Encouraged by the repeated declarations of the Canadians and Indians and urged by their requests," was the way Washington explained it to Congress, September 21, 1775, he detached Colonel Benedict Arnold with one thousand men to penetrate into Canada by way of the Kennebec River and, if possible, capture Quebec. The force marched to Marblehead and there sailed to the Kennebec and up that river as far as navigation would permit. Their destination was not divulged in camp. "For the satisfaction of Congress" Washington sent it a map of Arnold's route and among other information a copy of his instructions and his letter to Arnold, of the same date, that marked Washington as one of the very few men of the Revolution who had, in 1775, outgrown or overcome all religious prejudice in political matters. After emphasizing the necessity of courage and exhorting the troops to remember that they were marching into a country of friends and that no looting or plundering would be countenanced, Washington gave it in charge of Arnold "to avoid all disrespect to or Contempt of the Religion of the Country and its Ceremonies. Prudence, Policy and a true Christian Spirit, will lead us to look with Compassion upon their Errors without insulting them. While we are contending for our own Liberty, we should be very cautious of violating the Rights of Conscience in others, ever considering that God alone is the Judge of the hearts of Men, and to Him only in this case they are answerable." And the fourteenth item of Washington's Instructions to Arnold read: "As the Contempt of the Religion of a Country by ridiculing any of its Ceremonies, or affronting its Ministers or Votaries has ever been deeply resented, you are to be particularly careful to restrain every Officer and Soldier from such Imprudence and Folly and to punish every Instance of it. On the other Hand as far as lays in your power, you are to protect and support the free exercise of the Religion of the Country and the undisturbed enjoyment of the rights of Conscience in Religious Matters, with your utmost Influence and Authority." Such directions as these show a great advance beyond the point hinted at by John Adams in his Autobiography previously noted, and it is conceivable that Washington's observation of things in Cambridge convinced him of the expediency of definitely mentioning the contempt and ridiculing of alien religious cere-

monies. Seven weeks later (November 5, 1775), the General Orders delivered a blast against an intended display of religious bigotry which indicates how irritated Washington had become over the senseless prejudice that might easily have wrecked the cause to which he was devoting his thought, time and energy:

The Commander in Chief has been apprized of a design form'd for the observance of that ridiculous and childish custom of burning the Effigy of the pope: He cannot help expressing his surprise that there should be Officers and Soldiers in this army so void of common sense, as not to see the impropriety of such a step at this Juncture; at a Time when we are solliciting, and have really obtain'd the friendship and alliance of the people of Canada, whom we ought to consider as Brethren embarked in the same Cause. The defence of the general Liberty of America: at such a juncture, and in such Circumstances, to be insulting their Religion, is so monstrous, as not to be suffered or excused; indeed instead of offering the most remote insult, it is our duty to address public thanks to these our Brethren, as to them we are so much indebted for every late happy Success over the common Enemy in Canada.

George Washington was fighting for the liberty of America, and to his common-sense logic, men who were willing to risk that liberty by gratifying their narrow religious bigotry, valued that bigotry above the liberty of their country.

CHAPTER XXVII

DIFFICULTIES AND DETAILS—CAPITAL PUNISHMENT—NEW ENGLAND PREJUDICE AGAINST WASHINGTON

AFTER the first month, the siege of Boston settled down almost to a stalemate. In one of his earliest letters to Congress, after his arrival at Cambridge (July tenth), Washington acknowledged that he would "be extremely deficient in Gratitude as well as Justice, if I did not take the first Opportunity to acknowledge the Readiness and attention which Congress and different committees have shewn, to make everything as convenient and agreeable as possible. But there is a vital and inherent Principle of delay incompatible with Military service in transacting Business through such various and different channels. I esteem it my Duty therefore to represent the Inconvenience that must unavoidably ensue from a dependence on a number of Persons for supplies, and submit it to the consideration of the Congress whether the public service will not be best promoted by appointing a Commissary-General for these purposes." Congress acceded to this request and appointed Joseph Trumbull, a son of the Governor of Connecticut. This was not enthusiastically acclaimed in Massachusetts, but he filled the office with efficiency until his health broke under the strain and he died two years later. This commissary-general appointment was a major matter, but there were many minor ones pressing in upon the Commander-in-Chief, not the least of which was the added mite of embarrassment caused by President John Hancock's theatrical gesture of wishing to serve under him, even if he had "to take a firelock and join the ranks as a volunteer." Washington was able to counter this by expressing the great pleasure he would feel at seeing Hancock, regretting at the same time, "that so little is in my Power to offer, equal to Colonel Hancock's Merits and Worthy of his Acceptance."¹ Hancock evidently shared in this regret for he did not persist in his idea of serving in the ranks. The idea of a commanding general being bothered with such details as settling that the reveille was not to be beaten until a sentry could see clearly one thousand yards around him; settling the color of cockades for

officers' hats, as there were no uniforms for these distinctions, and deciding upon the cloth epaulettes for the corporals and sergeants, seems absurd to army practises of to-day, but these were only a few of Washington's annoyances. Lacking cloth for uniforms, Washington tried again his old Bouquet campaign trick of dressing the soldiers in hunting shirts and buckskin leggings "which would have a happy Tendency to unite the men and abolish those Provincial distinctions which lead to Jealousy and dissatisfaction." In order to overcome a possible New England prejudice to this he naïvely called attention to the fact that such a dress is supposed to carry some intimidation to the enemy, as every man wearing it was thought to be a complete marksman.

Lacking bayonets, Washington ordered that spears be made and, later in the war, these were manufactured with a folding staff and used as an infantry defense against the charge of the British light horse. The childish habit of firing off their muskets was contracted by the men and the excuse was offered that the charge had become stuck or corroded in the gun and could not be withdrawn. General orders against this indiscriminate firing, which alarmed the camp, were issued at intervals until well into the year 1776 but it was not until after the retreat through the Jerseys that the practise was finally suppressed. One of the most difficult matters to handle was the call for aid from various seaport towns which felt themselves in danger or threatened by the British. After the destruction of Falmouth by a British naval squadron nearly every town on the coast sent in a hurry call to the Commander-in-Chief, either directly or through the State Legislature, asking for a detachment of troops for its protection. The impossibility of acceding to these requests was so obvious that it is difficult to understand how a Legislature could have joined in such requests. It would, as Washington pointed out, have split the army up into small parties scattered over a large area and made it infinitely easy for the British to concentrate a larger force against every one of them and destroy them all piecemeal; but panic has small logic at its command and each township felt aggrieved and deserted and this feeling had an effect upon the enlistment of recruits for the main army, the towns feeling that strengthening the army gained them no protection. The militia, Washington wrote to the Massachusetts General Court, must furnish the protection in such cases.

It is the Misfortune of our Situation which exposes us to these Ravages, against which, in my Judgement, no such Temporary Relief would possibly secure us. The great advantage the Enemy has, of Transporting Troops, by being Master of the Sea, will enable them to harrass us by Diversions of this kind; and should we be tempted to pursue them upon every Alarm; The Army must either be weaken'd as to expose it to Destruction, or a great part of the Coast be still left unprotected. Nor, indeed, does it appear to me, that such a pursuit would be attended with the least Effect; The first Notice of such an Incursion would be its actual Execution; and long before any Troops could reach the Scene of Action, the Enemy would have an Opportunity to accomplish their purpose and retire. It would give me great pleasure to have it in my power, to extend Protection and Safety to every Individual; but the wisdom of the General Court will anticipate me in the necessity of conducting our Operations on a General and impartial Scale, so as to exclude any first cause of Complaint and Jealousy.

This plain exposition does not seem to have satisfied the Massachusetts Legislature as that body appointed a committee to wait upon the General and request him to inform the council of the state as to the extent of the powers delegated to him by the Continental Congress.

It was the way in which Washington met this sort of thing that stamps him as the remarkable man of the Revolution. With a delicate sense of honor, quick to react against the slightest overstepping of bounds, he met innumerable, clumsy impertinences with the wise forbearance of an indulgent parent. That which was best for liberty allowed not even the personal feelings of George Washington to interfere or obstruct. While he held himself thus, he was yet broad enough not to hold other men strictly to account in anything except common honesty. Against dishonesty and falsity to the cause he flamed into wrath that brooked no compromise. His feeling for the private soldier led him to pardon many capital offenses and, where he could not pardon, he yet delayed punishment as long as it could be done. The death sentences of courts martial show a singular record. There were but three or four executions in the first three years of the war (whippings were the usual sentence for the capital crime of desertion), which is evidence of the hesitancy with which Washington approved death warrants; but in 1779 came a decided change. Congress approved

capital punishment for desertion, discipline was tightened and in that year there were twenty-seven executions for desertion and giving aid to the enemy. In 1780 the total for the year dropped to nineteen or twenty; in 1781, the Yorktown year, it was reduced to ten; but in 1782 it rose again to the neighborhood of fourteen and the last year of the war, when it was clear that the armed conflict was over, there seem to have been no executions at all.

When the British in Boston began making preparations for winter, Washington could not fathom their inactivity against his lines. He was "inclined to think" he wrote Congress,

that finding us so well prepared to receive them, the Plan of Operations is varied, that they mean by regular Approaches to bombard us out of our present Lines of Defence, or, are waiting in expectation that the Colonies must sink under the expence, or the prospect of a winter Campaign so discourage the Troops as to break up our Army. If they have not some such Expectation, the Issue of which they are determined to wait, I cannot Account for the Delay when their Strength is lessened every day by Sickness, Desertions and little Skirmishes.

None of these things, in their entirety, held Howe back from attacking the American lines, though the first of Washington's reasons was near the truth. The Bunker Hill wounded were still before the eyes of the British in the Boston hospitals and neither men nor officers cared to encounter the same punishment again, when there was nothing to be gained by it. Perhaps Washington's troops could have been driven back, after heavy British losses; it was conceivable that they could be routed, but Howe well knew his own strength would be so reduced after such an effort that he could not hope to hold even Boston against the American reinforcements that were bound to come forward. Boston had proved a poor base for military operations against America and future British plans for the war were already being laid along the Canada-Hudson River line, with the City of New York at the south end and Ticonderoga and Crown Point as half-way stations from the north. There was the ministerial idea too of cutting the stiff-necked New Englanders off from the rest of the colonies, by which means those who started the rebellion could be starved out and

the middle and southern colonies more easily handled. The plan had military strength and intelligence and political weakness and imbecility; but the British Government had been misled in too many ways by the reports of the royal governors of the colonies, to be able to see the American situation with clarity. So Howe, in Boston, waited for reinforcements and supplies, which were sent him with much loss and difficulty, while Washington was working night and day to obtain and train an army, to secure powder and accumulate material sufficient to use that army in forcing the evacuation of Boston. Hours that could have been put to better use were consumed in meetings of boards of officers to arrange questions of rank, for Washington was canny enough to know that the only arrangement that could withstand criticism and complaint was one that the officers themselves created.²

But the question of all the officers being selected from Massachusetts was one that furnished early grounds for the first growth of New England prejudice against Washington. He put the matter on a common-sense basis in his letter to Joseph Palmer, chairman of a committee of the Massachusetts Legislature:

In truth, Sir, I think it sound policy to bestow Officers indiscriminately among the Gentlemen of the different Governmts.; for as all bear a proportionable part toward the expence of this war, if no Gentlemen out of these four Governments come in for any share of the appointments, it may be apt to create jealousies which will, in the end, give disgust; for this reason, I would earnestly recommend to your Board to provide for some of the Volunteers who are come from Philadelphia with very warm Recommendations, tho' strangers to me.

But to Richard Henry Lee, Washington expressed the matter differently:

As we have now nearly compleated our Lines of Defence, we have nothing more, in *my opinion* to fear from the *Enemy*, provided we can keep our men to their duty and make them watchful and vigilant; but it is among the most difficult tasks I ever undertook in my life to induce these people to believe that there is, or can be, danger till the

Bayonet is pushed at their Breasts; not that it proceeds from any uncommon prowess, but rather from an unaccountable kind of stupidity in the lower class of these people which, believe me, prevails but too generally among the officers of the Massachusetts *part* of the Army who are *nearly* all of the same kidney with the Privates, and adds not a little to my difficulties; as there is no such thing as getting of officers of this stamp to exert themselves in carrying orders into execution—to curry favor with the men (by whom they were chosen, and on whose smiles possibly they may think they may again rely) seems to be one of the principal objects of their attention.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

INTENDED SURPRISE OF BOSTON

WITH the siege of Boston well under way, Washington laid before his general officers a series of questions as "an incumbent duty," to obtain their opinion on making a successful attack on the city, by means of boats, and a land assault of the lines at the same time from Roxbury. "The success of such an Enterprize depends, I well know, upon the all wise disposer of Events, and is not within the reach of human wisdom to foretell the Issue."¹

Washington's reasons for such an attempt were, the approach of winter, the trouble and expense of providing barracks and fuel for the troops, the need of winter clothing for the men then in the service and if these same men did not reenlist "this difficulty will be increased to an almost insurmountable degree." Blankets were not to be obtained and if the troops would not serve longer than January first, new troops must be obtained and Congress would have two sets of men in pay at the same time. It was this last alternative, or disband the old force before obtaining a new one. These things, Washington knew, were not unknown to the British, who might be waiting for that very time of change to make their attack. The powder "not much of which would be consumed in such an enterprize" (because Washington expected the town would be carried by a surprise assault, or not at all), was daily wasting away and a new supply very uncertain. He summed up the situation by stating that the "expence of supporting this Army will so far exceed any Idea that was form'd in Congress of it that I do not know what will be the consequences." In the council of war, September eleventh, these consequences were classed as being possibly "very fatal." It is evident, by Washington's reasoning, that he was becoming well versed in reading the mind of Congress and in anticipating the reaction of that body to the results of its own ineptitude. His idea was to strike while his military strength was greatest, because he foresaw that by the time winter set in, that strength would have greatly

waned. The council of war decided that it was inexpedient to make the attempt "at present at least" and one of the reasons for this decision was given as "the Expectation of soon receiving some important Advice from England." This was the baneful influence of the delusive idea that in some vague way an "accommodation" with Great Britain would take place that would bring peace to America, with all the privileges for which she was contending. It was this that interfered at all points with the vigor of America's efforts and around this idea was grouped the political opposition that Washington encountered. Even after July 4, 1776, this opposition remained alive and bitterly active in Congress, and the Conway Cabal was but a disastrous and almost inevitable manifestation made by the protestants against the course of events.

That the decision of the council of war was acquiesced in by Washington is evidence that he did not consider a surprise attack on Boston as holding out more than an equal chance of success and failure. But the idea was no more wild and desperate than any other planned, military surprise attack. The emphasis Washington placed on the secrecy of the move is the key of the plan, and to consider that he intended to embark his army in boats in broad daylight and assault the British works with the same thick-headed stupidity with which Gage had slaughtered his men at Bunker Hill, is unfair to Washington. Even a slight knowledge of the number of times Washington planned surprise attacks during the later years of the war and the number of times he stopped the moves, almost at the last moment, readily explains this intended enterprise in the first year of the war. It is strange that Washington is not understood as the man ever ready to take a sporting chance. The old fox-hunting, horse-racing days in Virginia, before the Revolution, and his many investments in lotteries, were not sporadic happenings but ingrained characteristics. The sporting chance was a thing from which George Washington never shrank and the sporting chances he took throughout the war were many. Long Island was one, Trenton another, Germantown another and even Yorktown was nothing but a sporting chance, albeit, like all the others, it was a sporting chance backed by the most careful planning, for Washington was not reckless when playing for what he sincerely believed to be the greatest stake in life, political liberty. Neither was he the hesitant over-cautious plodder his contemporary enemies claimed him to be; which

claim has been seized upon by unthinking later critics as their own marvelous discovery. There were few men of the Revolution who thought and saw as far ahead as Washington and as early as September, 1775, he expected the British to give up Boston and remove to New York City as a base for their operations.²

The British troops affected to hold the American in contempt and Washington could not understand why they did not assault his works. He did not see that the British were playing the same waiting game as himself; but while Washington was *forced* to wait from lack of men and supplies, Gage, and later Howe, was not held back by lack of equipment. In truth each side hoped that the other would attack, as each felt that it was in a strong defensive position. Washington's description of the British works, as "surrounded with Ships of War, Floating Batteries &c, and the narrow necks of land leading into them, fortified in such a manner as not to be forced without a very considerable slaughter, if practicable at all,"³ is sufficient evidence that his idea of attack must have been based entirely upon surprise and the best troops in the world, if completely surprised, can not give a good account of themselves. In his report to Congress on this plan Washington stated his opinion that "After frequently reconnoitring the Situation of the Enemy in the Town of Boston, collecting all possible Intelligence, and digesting the whole, a surprize did not appear impracticable though hazardous."⁴

Washington's spies kept him well informed of conditions in Boston just as the British managed to keep informed as to matters in the American lines, and he knew of the taut nerves under the red coats, the disease and starvation diet in the British Army and the low morale in the ranks,⁵ so that his plan of a sudden, surprise attack sharply delivered, was not such a foolhardy thing as some profess to believe. His idea was to use his army while his army held together; before it disintegrated, and armies are certainly created to be used. It was not possible for any of the officers of the American troops to understand these reasons, but the long wearing wait behind the breastworks before Boston was teaching George Washington lessons in military patience which he never forgot. His desire to attack Boston was not a case of irritation overbalancing judgment. He saw his army melting away before his eyes, the time-expired men leaving and the new recruits arriving too slowly to replace them, and of the two evils,

the collapse of the Revolution by inability to raise an army, or its end by total defeat in battle, he preferred the latter. Such an end would, at least, be one of honor which would merit no contempt and George Washington could not bear the thought of a failure that carried with it the scorn of men.

CHAPTER XXIX

OPPOSITION TO A PERMANENT ARMY—PAY—PROMOTIONS AND PUNISHMENTS

REENLISTING a new army began to weigh heavily upon Washington almost as soon as he took command at Cambridge. The situation, the times of service of the troops besieging Boston and the difficulties experienced in recruiting to replace them when their services expired, was such that it almost seemed that now the war had been taken over by the Congress, New England was scheming to have her forces around Boston replaced entirely by troops from other colonies. Washington wrote to the President of Congress that there was "some Difficulty in procuring the Subscription of both Officers and Soldiers to the Continental Articles of War. Their principal Objection has been, that it might subject them to longer Service than that for which they were engaged under the several Provincial Establishments." (This was the crux of a main difficulty until the Revolution was more than half over: the refusal of all the colonies to admit the necessity of a permanent army and enlistment periods long enough to train and season a soldier.) America was afraid of the standing army idea and none were more opposed to it than New England. As Washington wrote, "It is in vain to attempt to reason away the Prejudices of a whole Army, often instilled and in this Instance at least encouraged by the Officers from private and narrow Views." The restraints of necessary discipline and subordination had roused such antagonism to every change that Washington, from policy, had to see to it that as little novelty as possible was introduced into the army. It is easy to imagine the state of mind of a commander-in-chief who has to be diplomatic and watchful of temperamental idiosyncrasies in his force before he can even plan how to use it as a fighting machine. None of the troops were engaged to stay beyond January 1, 1776; the men of Connecticut and Rhode Island were engaged only until December 1, 1775, so that by September of the first year of the war, Washington was urging Congress to take steps to provide

a new army before the time of the old one expired. The broad range of Washington's thought is plain in the ideas he placed before Congress. After calling attention to the point that the general officers thought that many of the New England soldiers would reenlist, if they were granted furloughs, Washington submitted: "How far it may be proper to form the new Army entirely out of the Old for another Campaign, rather than from the Contingents of the several Provinces, is a Question which involved in it too many Considerations of Policy and Prudence for me to undertake to decide." The amount of knowledge of the political conditions in the colonies displayed in this sentence is sufficient to show that General George Washington was well aware of the fact that even thus early, complete unanimity in the struggle for liberty did not exist among the representatives of the people. It certainly was not present among the troops themselves, as Washington immediately found when he ordered a month's pay to be issued to the Massachusetts troops and they at once advanced a claim for pay by the lunar, rather than the calendar month.

The Rhode Island and Connecticut troops who with the Massachusetts men formed the larger part of the army, abided by the calendar month. Congress, when appealed to, settled this pinch-penny claim by establishing all payments on the calendar month basis and Washington clinched the matter by informing the Massachusetts Legislature that the difference, if persisted in, "must be considered a Colonial and not a Continental charge."¹

But the greatest trouble lay in the fact that the winter was "fast approaching upon a naked Army, the time of their Service within a few Weeks of expiring, and no Provision yet made for such important Events. Added to this the military Chest is totally exhausted. . . . and the greater part of the Army in a State not far from mutiny." The Commissary-General Joseph Trumbull, put it that, "A commissary with twenty thousand gaping mouths open full upon him and nothing to stop them with, must depend upon being devoured himself,"² with a paymaster and other nominal nonentities not able to advance a shilling. He was having the heart dunned out of him and not able to pay for a bushel of potatoes. It was a week before Washington's letter was read in Congress and a committee appointed to visit camp and report to Congress on the situation. This committee did not arrive at camp until October fifteenth, three weeks

after Washington wrote his emphatic letter and just what Commissary Trumbull had succeeded in doing about his bushel of potatoes by that time is not recorded.

Soldiers were being court-martialed daily for offenses that ranged from theft, drunkenness and assaulting officers to sleeping on duty; and being daily whipped upon the bare back with cat-o'-nine-tails, but the number of culprits did not diminish by this brutal treatment and the Commander-in-Chief was himself inconvenienced by light-fingered gentry in camp, as his accounts show the payment of a reward of £1:10 "for recovering my Pistols which had been stolen, and for repairing them afterwards." Gambling was inveighed against in the orders of October third; profanity had been ruled out by those of July fourth, by calling attention to the Articles of War, in the composition of which Washington had had a hand, which forbade "cursing, swearing and drunkenness."⁸ To this Washington added that it was expected that all officers and soldiers not on duty should attend divine service "to implore the blessing of heaven upon the means used for our safety and defence." The idea of liberty and independence had not yet advanced to the point where it could be publicly commented on and "safety and defence" was as far as Washington felt it wise to go in July, 1775.

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CHAPTER XXX

POWDER AND ARMS—REENLISTMENT OF OFFICERS— TREES—DISCIPLINE

IN SEPTEMBER, General Gage was recalled from the command in Boston and Sir William Howe succeeded him. As early as this the British Ministry was considering the advisability of evacuating Boston and transferring the troops to New York, from which point expeditions could easily overrun New England. Rhode Island also was looked upon as a good base of operations and its seizure was planned as auxiliary to New York.

On September twenty-sixth, Congress asked Washington for information as to the number of men needed for a winter's campaign; whether the pay of the privates could be reduced; what ration should be allowed and what additional regulations were necessary for the army. President Hancock's letter of September twenty-sixth suggested that Washington consult his general officers as to these matters, which makes it evident that Congress, as yet, was not well acquainted with the Commander-in-Chief of the army. The suggestion, in its assumption that the General needed such a hint, was quite tactless and could easily have been considered officiously impertinent. Washington ignored such an interpretation, and his rejoinder is delightful:

Previous to the Direction of Congress to consult the General Officers on the best method of continuing and providing for the Army during the Winter, I had desired their thoughts upon these Subjects and to favor me with the result by a particular Day in Writing. In this Interval the Appointment of Doctor Franklin, Mr. Lynch and Col. Harrison was communicated; an Event which has given me the highest Satisfaction, as the Subject was too Weighty and complex for a discussion by Letter. This Appointment made any conclusion here unnecessary, as it is not probable any such arrangement would be agreed on, as would not be altered in some respects, in a full and free conference."¹

Washington called a council of officers and submitted the above queries and five more of his own, which five are much more practical and important than the four asked by Congress. They were: For how long a time should men be enlisted; how can the army be clothed and should pay for the clothing be deducted from the men's pay; how can the unequal pay of the troops be equalized; what should be the strength of regiments and companies; how can the best of the present officers be retained in the service? The council decided, unanimously, that the army ought to consist of not less than 20,372 men, in 26 regiments, exclusive of riflemen and artillery, each regiment to be 728 strong, officers included; that the pay could not be reduced at present, the then allowance of provisions to stand and the commissaries to pay in cash for articles allowed but not furnished; the term of enlistment should be to December 1, 1776. The other questions were reserved for further discussion.

Washington forwarded the estimates called for by Congress and announced the unanimous opinion of the officers that the pay of the soldiers could not be touched with safety at present. He mentioned that the news from Europe was that England intended to send a force either to New York or some middle colony, and it is illuminating to find him asking for "the Pleasure of Congress whether upon such an Event it would be expected that a part of this Army should be detached or the internal Force of such Colony and its Neighbourhood be deemed sufficient, or whether in such case I am to await the particular Direction of Congress."

He received a cheering word from his brother, John Augustine, in Virginia, of the activity in that state in the manufacture of arms and ammunition. "A plenty of these," he replied, "and unanimity and Fortitude among ourselves must defeat every attempt that a diabolical Ministry can Invent to Inslave this great Continent." Here was the theatrical touch again and then came the wise and common-sense Washington direction: "In the Manufacturing of Arms for Publick use great care should be taken to make the bores of the same size, that the same Balls may answer, otherwise great disadvantages may arise from a mixture of Cartridges."

The supply of arms and ammunition was one of the biggest problems confronting the colonists after hostilities commenced. There were practically no manufactures, the Parliamentary acts had seen to this, and while the frontiersmen had their own arms, conditions on the Atlantic seaboard

and the populous centers were not so very different from what it always is in regard to firearms. The supply for the militia first called out exhausted the stores on hand, which were largely a legacy of the French and Indian War, and though many of the later recruits were able to furnish themselves with muskets of a sort, these first militia had introduced the bad habit of taking the arms home with them when their times of service expired. This practise was difficult to stop and Washington's orders and letters against it were frequent. Then too the breakage and loss in action was considerable and every skirmish, no matter how slight, registered further destruction of arms. The capture by Washington's armed vessels,² the privateers and, later, the few naval vessels the Congress were able to put on the sea, helped to an extent and the supply of powder was added to through this channel, but both these sources were precarious dependencies and, until Beaumarchais's ships began to arrive and, later, the munitions from the French Government direct, the principal dependence seems to have been upon the West India trade. There is very little known of this as yet, only vague hints here and there, and perhaps we will never be able to get the full story, as it seems to have been a matter of private commercialism in which French, Spanish and perhaps English, West India merchants were financially interested. However, a barely sufficient supply of both arms and ammunition did trickle in though there was never a surplus above the actual need.

Washington fully expected to be able to return home to Mount Vernon each winter, should the war last more than a year or two, and this is not so absurd as it appears to us, for it was the practise of armies to retire into winter quarters during the cold season and small scouting forces were thought amply sufficient to take care of any necessary winter maneuvering. Washington's experience with the Indians on the Virginia frontier had shown him that the savages seldom ventured forth in the snow and disagreeable weather, the conduct of Dunbar, after Braddock's defeat, and the importance Forbes attached to the idea of winter quarters in the final campaign against Fort Duquesne, had impressed this point upon Washington's mind as a proper military conduct. But he found that conditions at Cambridge would not permit him to leave and, "seeing no great prospect of returning to my Family and Friends this Winter I have sent an Invitation to Mrs. Washington to come to me, altho' I fear the Sea-

son is too far advanced . . . to admit of this with any tolerable degree of convenience. I have laid a state of the difficulties, which however must attend the journey before her and left it to her own choice." Mrs. Washington chose to go to Cambridge. Washington was never able to spend a winter at Mount Vernon during the war and Mrs. Washington visited Headquarters each year, returning to Mount Vernon when the army prepared to take the field in the spring.

The principal energies in the fall of 1775 were devoted to arrangements for insuring the enlistment of a new and sufficient force by January 1, 1776, to replace the time-expired troops then besieging Boston, and seeing to it that these new enlisted troops had a sufficient number of capable officers. The officers then in service were asked to state whether or not they would continue, but they were slow to respond and the General Orders of October 26, 1775, called attention to the fact that

The General directs, that every Officer in the Army, do forthwith declare to his Colonel or Commanding Officer of the regt. to which he belongs, whether he will, or will not continue in the service, until the last day of December 1776 (if the Continental Congress shall think it expedient to retain him so long) This declaration, must be made in explicit terms, and not conditional; as the Congress are to be advised thereof immediately, in order that proper Steps may be taken to provide other Officers, and other Men if necessary.—The times, and the Importance of the Great Cause we are engaged in, allow no room for hesitation and delay—When Life, Liberty, and Property are at stake, when our Country is in danger of being a melancholy Scene of bloodshed, and desolation, when our towns are laid in ashes, and innocent Women and Children driven from their peaceful habitations, exposed to the rigour of an inclement season, and to the hands of charity perhaps for a support. When Calamities like these are staring us in the face, and a brutal, savage enemy, (more so than was ever yet found in a civilized nation), are threatening us, and every thing we hold dear, with Destruction from foreign Troops, it little becomes the Character of a Soldier to shrink from danger, and condition for new terms.

Here is the dramatic touch again and there are few occasions where the touch was fitting that Washington failed to develop it. Yet in this, like

other occasions, the facts were as he stated them and the form of the statement was not entirely an exaggeration. A balance to these dramatics is in Washington's letter to General Schuyler, this same day, in which after acknowledging that he believed the salvation of the country to depend "in a great degree" upon the success of Schuyler's Canadian efforts, he questions the plan as his

anxiety suggests some Doubts, which your better acquaintance with the Country will enable you to remove. Would it not have been practicable to pass St. John's, leaving Force enough for a Blockade; or if you could not spare the Men, passing it wholly, possessing yourselves of Montreal, and the surrounding Country? Would not St. John's have fallen of Course, or what would have been the probable Consequence? Believe me, dear General, I do not mean to imply the smallest Doubt of the propriety of your Operations, or of those of Mr. Montgomery, for whom I have great respect. I too well know the absurdity of judging upon a Military Operation, when you are without the Knowledge of its concomitant Circumstances. I only mean it as a matter of Curiosity, and to suggest to you my imperfect Idea on the subject.

This sort of presentation of thought alongside of the exhortation to officers to reenlist, displays a versatility and ability to meet vastly different situations in vastly different ways and furnishes us with something of an idea of the meaning of Washington's statement that his mind was "on the stretch" at all times.

To add to his worries the price of fire-wood began to rise as the winter approached and he was forced to write to the Massachusetts Legislature that the consequences of this scarcity, which he believed was artificial, would be almost fatal to the army. Less than a week later he wrote the Legislature that there was hardly four hours' supply of wood on hand and that different regiments were on the point of cutting one another's throats for a few standing locusts near the encampment, with which to cook their food.

It has been a matter of great grief to me to see so many Valuable Plantations of Trees destroyed. I endeavoured (whilst there appeared a Possibility of restraining it) to prevent the practice, but it

is out of my power to do it: from Fences to Forrest Trees, and from Forrest Trees to fruit Trees, is a natural advance to houses, which must next follow; this is not all, the distress of the Soldiers in the Article of Wood will I fear have an unhappy influence upon their enlisting again.³

As early as July he had endeavored to stop the destruction of valuable trees along the roadside that were not in the way of either breastworks or guns and promised severe punishment if the practise was not stopped. Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Reed arrested some men who cut down trees in defiance of orders. Application for their release was immediately made and Washington felt obliged to release them, at the same time excusing the infraction of orders on the ground of the disagreeableness of the weather and the scarcity of fire-wood. He, however, complimented Colonel Reed on his action and expressed the hope that in the future, wanton cutting of trees would be avoided, as also "Committing waste upon the property of those, already too much distressed by the depredations of the army."⁴

To the southern planter, whose appreciation of the value of woodland and trees was keen, this disregard of valuable property did violence to the frugal reputation of the New Englander and was a distinct surprise. It was but one of many incidents which showed how carefully Washington had to enforce discipline. Too much strictness at the wrong time might have led to serious disturbances in the army. It was like a machinist being unable to use his machine to the best advantage because too great an application of the power at his disposal might cause the thing to buckle or crack. The wonder is not that Washington took so long to win through to victory, but that he was able to gain victory at all. To Congress he described this condition in his letter of May 11, 1776:

I would observe at the same time that I have endeavoured (and I flatter myself not without some good effect) to support the authority of Congress and a due subordination in the Army, I have found it of importance and expedient to yield many points, without seeming to have done it, and this to avoid bringing on a too frequent discussion of matters which in a political view ought to be kept a little behind the curtain and not made too much the subjects of disquisi-

tion. Time only can eradicate and overcome customs prejudices of long standing; they must be got the better of, by slow and gradual advances.

The idea that a general in supreme command of an army must carefully consider the prejudices and notions of his officers and men, before he could be sure of his orders being carried out, is so unusual to us to-day that the point needs emphasizing. Any military analysis of Washington's handling of the Continental Army as a fighting machine is worthless unless such an unusual factor as this is carefully weighed.

CHAPTER XXXI

DIFFICULTIES WITH OFFICERS—ADVICE—CHARITY, RELIGION AND LIBERTY AGAIN

THE formation of a new army to come into existence on January 1, 1776, brought new troubles on Washington's shoulders. His letter to Joseph Reed, of November 8, 1775, describes them: The question of officers was a burning one. Enlistments were slow and not enough soldiers were recruited to give employment to the same number of officers that had been in the old army, and with some states raising more troops than others the idea was broached of officering them with experienced officers no matter from what states, who were willing to continue, but who could not raise men. All things being equal it was better to keep one of the experienced officers than to accept a new and untrained man with new and untrained troops, but immediately came a difficulty: "Connecticut wants no Massachusetts man in their corps; Massachusetts thinks there is no necessity [for a Rhode Islander] to be introduced amongst them; and New Hampshire says, it is very hard, that her valuable and experienced officers (who are willing to serve) should be discarded because her own regiments, under the new establishment, cannot provide for them." To Congress he wrote, November eleventh:

The trouble in the Arrangement of the Army is really Inconceivable, many of the Officers sent in their names to serve in expectation of Promotion, others stood aloof to see what advantage they could make for themselves, whilst a number who had declined, have again sent in their names to serve, so great has the confusion arising from these and many other perplexing circumstances been, that I found it impossible to fix this very interesting business exactly on the Plan resolved on in Conference, tho I have kept to the Spirit, as near as the nature and the necessity of the case would admit of. The Difficulty with the Soldiers is as great, indeed more so if possible, than with the Officers. They will not enlist until they know their Colonel, Lt.

Colonel, Major, Captain &ca, so that it is necessary to fix the Officers the first thing, which at last is in some manner done and I have given out enlisting orders.

These recruiting instructions directed that "The Officers are to be careful not to enlist any person, suspected of being unfriendly to the Liberties of America, or any abandon'd vagabond to whom all Causes and Countries are equal and alike indifferent. The Rights of mankind and the freedom of America, will have Numbers sufficient to support them, without resorting to such wretched assistance. Let those who wish to put Shackles upon Freemen fill their Ranks, and place their confidence in such miscreants." Here was the dramatic appeal again and George Washington must have felt reasonably sure that such appeals were effective or he would hardly have resorted to them. Alongside of this may be placed the exceedingly practical advice which he gave to Colonel William Woodford. It is a picture of Washington's idea of a good Continental Army colonel:

The Inexperience you complain of is a common case, and only to be remedied by practice and close attention. The best general advice I can give, and which I am sure you stand in no need of, is to be strict in your discipline; that is, to require nothing unreasonable of your officers and men, but see that whatever is required be punctually complied with. Reward and punish every man according to his merit, without partiality or prejudice; hear his complaints; if well founded, redress them; if otherwise, discourage them, in order to prevent frivolous ones. Discourage vice in every shape, and impress upon the mind of every man, from the first to the lowest, the importance of the cause, and what it is they are contending for. For ever keep in view the necessity of guarding against surprises. In all your marches, at times, at least, even when there is no possible danger, move with front, rear, and flank guards, that they may be familiarized with the use; and be regular in your encampments, appointing necessary guards for the security of your camp. In short, whether you expect an enemy or not, this should be practised; otherwise your attempts will be confused and awkward, when necessary. Be plain and precise in your orders, and keep copies of them to refer to, that no mistakes may happen. Be easy and condescending in your de-

portment to your officers, but not too familiar, lest you subject yourself to a want of that respect, which is necessary to support a proper command. These, Sir, not because I think you need the advice, but because you have been condescending enough to ask it, I have presumed to give as the great outlines of your conduct.

As to the manual exercise, the evolutions and manœuvres of a regiment, with other knowledge necessary to a soldier, you will acquire them from those authors, who have treated upon these subjects, among whom Bland (the newest edition) stands foremost; also an Essay on the Art of War; Instructions for Officers, lately published at Philadelphia; the Partisan; Young; and others.

The failure of the council of war, of September eleventh, to approve the idea of a surprise attack on Boston did not dampen Washington's hope of accomplishing something of a positive nature. On November seventeenth he suggested to General Ward the possibility of a surprise (always a surprise, which is proof of his understanding that the troops needed the greatest of chances in their favor, if success was to be won) of Castle William. Spy reports had it that not more than three hundred British garrisoned the place and Washington was sure that the available whale-boats could transport from eight hundred to one thousand men to the Castle "which, with a very moderate Share of conduct and spirit, might, I should think, bring off the Garrison, if not some part of the Stores. I wish you to discuss this matter (under the Rose) with Officers of whose judgment and conduct you can rely." Then came a phrase which showed the important point that was troubling Washington's mind "some thing of this sort may shew how far the Men are to be depended upon." It was almost as though he cried out, "Give me real soldiers and I will show you how to handle the British."

But this project too was thought impracticable and became one of the postponed plans. Near the end of November we are allowed another glimpse under the surface of Washington's thoughts, through a memorandum which he made of his letter to Lund Washington. Washington kept few copies of his personal letters (or letters he considered as such) though he was careful to have recorded his letters of a public or business nature. His reasons for this can only be guessed but there seems to have been something of a quixotic feeling behind the custom; a feeling that to keep

copies of personal letters to friends was not a polite thing to do. Almost invariably the letters of which no copies are to be found in the Washington Papers are of the personal type, or are short minor notes of little consequence. The importance of the letter written to Lund, November twenty-sixth, may be judged by this unusual memorandum which Washington made of its contents. After copying out the general terms on which Lund was to manage the Mount Vernon farms, Washington wrote: "It is the greatest, indeed it is the only comfortable reflexion I enjoy on this score, to think that my business is in the hands of a person in whose integrity I have not a doubt, and on whose care I can rely. Was it not for this, I should feel very unhappy on Account of the situation of my affairs; but I am persuaded you will do for me as you would for yourself, and more than this I cannot expect." The next two paragraphs are revealing:

Let the Hospitality of the House, with respect to the poor be kept up; Let no one go hungry away. If any of these kind of People should be in want of Corn, supply their necessities, provided it does not encourage them in idleness; and I have no objection to your giving my Money in Charity, to the Amount of forty or fifty Pounds a Year, when you think it well bestowed. What I mean, by having no objection, is, that it is my desire that it should be done. You are to consider that neither myself or Wife are now in the way to do these good Offices. In all other respects, I recommend it to you, and have no doubts, of your observing the greatest economy and frugality; as I suppose you know that I do not get a farthing for my services here more than my Expenses; It becomes necessary, therefore, for me to be saving at home.

The above is copied, not only to remind myself of my promises, and requests, but others also, if any mischance happens to G. WASHINGTON.

Here, in rough outline, is the place Mount Vernon occupied in the community life of that section of tide-water Potomac.

Two days after making this memorandum of his letter to Lund, George Washington again, all unconsciously, affords us another important insight into his basic character. In announcing to the army the surrender of the city of Montreal, he expressed the hope that "such frequent Favors

from divine providence will Animate every American to continue to exert his utmost, in the defence of the Liberties of his Country, as it would now be the basest ingratitude to the Almighty and to their Country, to shew any the least backwardness in the public cause."¹ It is plain from the many acknowledgments of Washington that his was a faith of firm reliance on the help of God in assisting men in their struggle toward betterment, but it is even plainer that he believed this betterment must be not only a worthy goal, but that men must strive toward it worthily. To George Washington, political liberty was the highest earthly goal to which man could aspire, and human liberty in Washington's mind gradually became fused with his religious ideas. Liberty for America became the one absorbing thought, the one great purpose, to which everything else was subordinate. Liberty, George Washington was convinced, was approved by God and America could confidently rely upon God's help in her struggle for freedom, if she were worthy of help. Washington's exhortations to his soldiers, in both victory and defeat, were to be worthy. It is difficult to analyze accurately the mental processes of Washington in this most important principle in his life. Most important because he so considered it; but the outline which appears more or less vaguely at times in his letters and orders takes shape and form thus: By training, by association and by custom, George Washington was an earnest and honest believer in the right and justice of constituted authority. The gradual disregard of justice and right by the British Government in dealing with Virginia (which touched Washington's own commercial and business dealings) slowly alienated his natural allegiance to the King, for it was as impossible for George Washington, as it was for other Americans, not to consider right and justice as more important than political allegiance. But in Washington's case, it was absolutely necessary for the man to find a worthy substitute for the constituted authority against which he was forced finally to rebel, and he found that substitute in the political liberty of America. He looked to the establishment of a constituted authority by this political liberty, which would function with a greater justice and fairness to every American than had the British Government and because of the sincerity of his past allegiance to the King, he was the more sincere, if possible, in his allegiance to American liberty. Had George Washington not been able to replace his British allegiance with an allegiance to

something higher and better, it is decidedly probable that he would have been a loyalist throughout the Revolution.

It is worth noting that the very lack of religious enthusiasm in Washington made him believe more strongly that America was receiving help from on high and he was too honest a man to deny it. His estimate of the value of the aid from France is too often and too emphatically recorded in his letters to admit of a doubt of that estimate and there is something more than mere rhetoric in the form he chose to announce the French alliance to the army: "It having pleased the Almighty Ruler of the Universe to defend the cause of the United American States, and finally to raise up a powerful friend among the princes of the Earth, to establish our liberty and independence upon a lasting foundation: it becomes us to set apart a day for gratefully acknowledging the divine goodness and celebrating the important event which we owe to his divine interposition."² We shall see, later, how close this was to the truth.

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CHAPTER XXXII

RAISING A NEW ARMY—AID FROM FRANCE

IT WAS in November, 1775, that the fact began to dawn upon Washington that there was an "egregious want of Public Spirit" in Massachusetts. "Instead of pressing to be engaged in the cause of their country, which I vainly flattered myself would be the case, I find we are likely to be deserted at a most critical time."¹ To Joseph Reed he wrote the same day:

Such a dearth of public spirit, and want of virtue, such stock-jobbing, and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantages of one kind or another, in this great change of military arrangement, I never saw before, and pray God I may never be witness to again. . . . We have been till this time enlisting about three thousand five hundred men. To engage these I have been obliged to allow furloughs as far as fifty men to a regiment, and the Officers I am persuaded indulge as many more. The Connecticut troops will not be prevailed upon to stay longer than their term (saving those who have been enlisted for the next campaign, and mostly on furlough) and such a dirty, mercenary spirit pervades the whole, that I should not be at all surprised at any disaster that may happen. In short after the last of this month our lines will be so weakened that the minute men and militia must be called in for their defence; these being under no kind of government themselves, will destroy the little subordination I have been labouring to establish, and run me into one evil whilst I am trying to avoid another; but the lesser must be chosen. Could I have foreseen what I have, and am likely to experience, no consideration upon earth should have induced me to accept this command.

This was not only a cry of disappointment at not being able to raise sufficient troops but, more than that it was a bitterness that New England did not measure up to the patriotic standard which Washington had accorded her in his own mind. There is nothing more disappointing than the discovery that men who have been considered worthy of honor are

not deserving. Thomas Lynch, Sr., one of the delegates in Congress from South Carolina, wrote to Washington on this point:

I am happy to inform you that Congress has agreed to every recommendation of the Committee [that had conferred with Washington at camp] and have gone beyond it in allowing to additional pay to the Officers. I rejoice at this but cant think with Patience, that pityfull wretches who stood cavilling with you when entreated to serve the next Campaign should reap the Benefit of this addition. they will now be ready enough, but hope you will be able to refuse them with the contempt they deserve and to find better in their room. . . . I have a Letter from undoubted Authority that assures me that the destruction of the Parliamentary Army in America will certainly produce Peace and by another that the seizing Quebec will produce the same Effect.²

Lynch, a firm friend of Washington, expresses the feeling against the New England men who were looked upon by inhabitants of other colonies as having started hostilities and were now shirking the lion's share of the resulting trouble. Strictly speaking, of course, from the moment the Continental Congress took over the army and the conduct of the war, all the colonies, from Massachusetts to Georgia, were obligated to share in the effort; but the perfectly natural reaction was that as the seat of war was in Massachusetts, where it had started, it was the duty of Massachusetts and the near-by colonies to support the major part of the difficulty. It was also quite natural for Massachusetts and the New England colonies to expect immediate and substantial assistance from the other colonies. Great distances and poor transportation were obstacles that could not be overcome in a moment and the Tory element was as active an obstacle in the other colonies as it was a difficulty in Massachusetts. Lynch's letter also makes plain the delusions under which America was fighting. At this time, November, 1775, Washington himself seems to have cherished an idea that the capture, or destruction, of the British force in Boston would bring peace.³

But as the weeks went by these ideas were gradually modified. Such things as the capture of the British store ship *Nancy* and the finding thereon of a vast number of letters from England, every one of which "breathes

nothing but Enmity to this country,"⁴ was an influence. As soon as Washington arrived at the point of believing there was no further hope of reconciliation with Great Britain, he became entirely and unalterably fixed in his determination to fight the matter out to the bitter end and, unlike many of the lauded patriots of the day, he never again harbored a thought of compromise or surrender. This single-minded purpose was nothing but Washington's sense of duty and his conception of honor, which, having approved a course and adopted it, became a thing that could not be changed or compromised without personal dishonor.

No matter from what view-point the Revolutionary War is studied, it is impossible to ignore Washington. He was the central point around which everything revolved; the army, the Continental Congress and, what has been unnoticed, or ignored, the diplomatic relations which resulted in the French alliance. The work of Deane, Franklin and Adams in France could never have produced the results it did, had not General George Washington been at the head of the army in America and had he not been exactly the kind of man he was. Any investigation of the diplomatic negotiations makes it plainer and plainer as document after document is examined and compared, that behind every success of Franklin and the others, France was watching and depending on the solid unalterable purpose of George Washington. Had he faltered once, had he shown doubt or indecision, even for a moment, as to that slippery, cowardly idea of "an accommodation with Great Britain," not the whole corps of the American Commissioners to Europe with the Continental Congress combined, could have accomplished a single one of the many and important things that were accomplished, in France, for the liberty and independence of the United States.

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CHAPTER XXXIII

THE NEW ARMY—THE KING'S SPEECH—DEFENSE OF NEW YORK—SHORT ENLISTMENTS

WASHINGTON's harrowing anxiety of the last two months of 1775 was whether or not the new army, which had to be recruited to take the place of the time-expired troops, which had been besieging Boston since June, would be obtained before the end of the year. The Connecticut troops marching off and the steady dwindling of his force compelled Washington to call for militia to fill the gaps in his lines. These came in willingly enough, as their term of service was short and fixed, but it was a temporary aid, like borrowing money on a short-time loan at ruinous interest rates. The British had already begun sending starving and destitute inhabitants of Boston out of the city and many of these refugees brought the smallpox with them, for that disease was raging in the beleaguered town. Washington supplied these unfortunates with rations, but held them away from the army until he could get the Massachusetts Government to look after them and the fear of the infection getting into the army became another of his worries. By December eleventh, only 5253 men had enlisted in the new army. "Our enlistment goes on slow. By the returns last Monday, only five thousand nine hundred and seventeen men are engaged for the ensuing campaign; and yet we are told, that we shall get the number wanted, as they are only playing off to see what advantages are to be made, and whether a bounty cannot be extorted either from the public at large, or individuals in a case of a draft. Time only can discover this. I doubt the measure exceedingly."¹ There was every indication that there would be a lack of arms for the new army and Washington adopted the drastic expedient of parading the troops whose enlistments were near expiring, and seizing the best muskets before the soldiers could conceal and make off with them.

By the first day of January, 1776, but half of the necessary troops had been recruited and the places of those who had marched off home

had to be filled by about five thousand militia. The total strength of the forces on the lines was then in the neighborhood of fourteen thousand; but the necessities of the case demanded that the same reasons which operated to conceal the weakness from the enemy, should also conceal it from friends.

An Army without Order, Regularity and Discipline [wrote Washington] is no better than a Commission'd Mob; Let us therefore, when everything dear and valuable to Freemen is at stake; when our unnatural Parent is threat'ning of us with destruction from every quarter, endeavour by all the Skill and Discipline in our power, to acquire that knowledge, and conduct, which is necessary in War—Our Men are brave and good; Men who with pleasure it is observed, are addicted to fewer Vices than are commonly found in Armies; but it is Subordination and Discipline (the Life and Soul of an Army) which next under providence, is to make us formidable to our enemies, honorable in ourselves, and respected in the world; and herein is to be shewn the Goodness of the Officer.²

The rest of the orders, in calling attention to the neglect of duty in the army, describe a situation that all military men would consider as appalling and Washington was well aware of this fact, but he was also aware of the fact that to enforce strict discipline would disrupt his army. It was well for America that George Washington could and did hold himself in leash and exhibit a patience equal to the tremendous strain put upon it.

In honor of the establishment of the new army, all military prisoners were pardoned and released "except Prisoners of war." Had this not been added, there is little doubt but that some of Washington's thick-headed officers would have blandly set free the British prisoners also.

Copies of King George's speech in opening the Parliament were sent from Boston and arrived in camp early in January. Washington forwarded one of these copies to Congress, calling it with a touch of satire, "his Majesty's most gracious Speech," and it seems to have been the rancor and resentment displayed therein that furnished the final rivet to Washington's belief that there was no further hope of any just settlement of the dispute with Britain. The royal intention of using vigorous measures "for depriving us of our Constitutional Rights and Liberties"

should be, he thought, "opposed by more vigorous ones," as these royal measures "tho' Authorized and sanctified by the Name of Majesty, . . . ought to promote the happiness of his People and not their Oppression." Washington had traveled a long way by January 4, 1776, from his thought and beliefs of the 1750s regarding his Majesty, the King. With some humor Washington wrote to Joseph Reed and told of the excitement caused in Boston by the hoisting of the new union flag (the thirteen red and white stripes with St. Andrew's and St. George's crosses in the field) over the American breastworks in honor of the creation of the new army, the day before the King's speech arrived. It was taken as a sign of submission in Boston but, as Washington wrote, "By this time I presume they begin to think it strange, that we have not made formal surrender of our lines." He needed his sense of humor to sustain him during the last month of 1775 and the first month of 1776, "for more than two months past, I have scarcely emerged from one difficulty before I have plunged into another. How it will end, God in his great goodness will direct. I am thankful for his protection to this time. We are told that we shall soon get the army completed, but I have been told so many things which have never come to pass, that I distrust everything."³ The extraordinary feat had been accomplished of disbanding one army and recruiting another within musket-shot of twenty veteran British regiments, all the time without enough powder to fight a respectable engagement; but the army so recruited was far from respectable while time-expired troops were daily marching off from the lines, all of them seized, as Washington put it, with "the same desire of retiring into a chimney-corner."

The British did not attack the American lines during this reorganization for the same reasons that had formerly held Howe back from an assault. There was nothing to be gained by a victory and everything to lose by a defeat and though Howe received reports from spies as to conditions in the American lines, it is quite probable that he had doubts as to the complete accuracy of them while he was certain of the disaster it would be to discover that these reports were false after an assault began. Howe, cooped up in the city, had no means of checking up his information to establish its truth or falsity; but Washington, with an open country at his back, could check fairly well the truth of the spy reports that he received as to conditions in Boston. He knew the American weak-

ness and it was from a deeply troubled mind that in January, 1776, he wished "this month well over our heads."

In the first week of January his orders tried to infuse a pride of personal cleanliness into the soldiers and hammered again at the necessity of camp sanitation and hygiene. With all his other troubles he could not entirely prevent the inhabitants from trading with the British. He wrote Governor Cooke of Rhode Island that "We need not expect to Conquer our Enemies by good Offices" and complained that the inhabitants of Newport were furnishing food supplies to the British ships.

The British fitting out a naval expedition at Boston led Washington to send Major-General Charles Lee to New York City to take measures to defend that place, as there was no reasonable destination for a British squadron other than New York, and Washington was fully aware of the military value of the city and harbor, which would give the British control of the Hudson, "the Command of the Country and the Communication with Canada." The campaign moves of the British during the war seldom deceived Washington. He was not able always to meet these moves and the British did not always act promptly according to Washington's conjectures; but the British succeeded in puzzling the American Commander-in-Chief, only when they did not act according to the logic, reason and military obviousness of the situation. It actually seemed that the important military mistakes of the British were those wherein they acted differently from the ways in which Washington expected them to act.

But Lee's mission to New York City, while proper and advisable, prepared a ground for the New York campaign that rendered defeat and the loss of the city more inevitable than it already was. There are indications in Washington's letters that he was doubtful from the beginning that New York could be defended against the combined land and sea force that Britain could bring against it; but his understanding of the value of the Hudson River, and the political pressure exerted in Congress for the defense of New York, carried him into a situation from which there was no outlet, except through defeat. His instructions to Lee, while comprehensively general as to defense preparations, show the existence of fully as great an interest in the suppression of the large number of loyalists in New York City and in Long Island. These instructions are important for their revelation of Washington's thought on the fundamental issue of the

war. In them he states that "we find by his Majesty's Speech to Parliament, that, disregarding the Petition from the United Voice of America, nothing less than the total Subversion of her Rights will satisfie him." This fairly marks the point where George Washington gave up all idea of obtaining anything from Britain other than what could be wrested from her by force of arms.

In a letter to Joseph Reed, February 10, 1776, he states in fact that after he heard of the measures adopted in consequence of the battle of Bunker Hill, he gave up all idea of an accommodation. The King's speech confirmed the sentiments he entertained and thus early Washington stated that if all men were of his mind, they would announce to the British Ministry their "determination to shake off all connexions with a state so unjust and so unnatural." George Washington, by his own unaided reasoning, had reached the point of favoring complete independence four months before the resolution of independence was introduced into Congress and five months before independence was voted by that body. And this was a direct and unequivocal thought, entirely minus the quibbling and hedging, later so conspicuous in many of our greatly lauded patriots.

It took ten days to get returns of the strength of the regiments in the new army. Washington then discovered that many of the troops returning home in December of the preceding year, had carried off their arms with them, despite the precautions he had taken to prevent it. Those that were not stolen were made way with under the pretense of their being condemned. In the middle of January there were not one hundred muskets in reserve, even though the regiments had been but half recruited. Washington had given up all hope of getting the army filled up by voluntary enlistment, which was the method pursued. The discontented officers had poisoned the minds of the men against recruiting.

Few people know [Washington wrote to Joseph Reed, January fourteenth] the predicament we are in, on a thousand accounts; fewer still will believe, if any disaster happens to these lines, from what cause it flows. . . . The reflection on my situation, and that of this army, produces many an uneasy hour when all around me are wrapped in sleep. . . . I have often thought how much happier I should have been . . . if I could have justified the measure to pos-

terity and my own conscience, had [I] retired to the back country and lived in a wigwam. If I shall be able to rise superior to these and many other difficulties, which might be enumerated, I shall most religiously believe that the finger of Providence is in it, to blind the eyes of our enemies.

Here is an expression of the Washington sense of duty; that ever-present realization with him that the responsibilities of the position of commander-in-chief could not be tossed aside simply because they had become personally onerous and difficult. An important and unsettled question in Washington's mind was the courage of his troops. Outside of a few skirmishes on the lines and some small raids against the British outposts, Washington had had no opportunity to observe their steadiness under fire. The behavior at Bunker Hill he knew only by report; and from personal contact with the men at Cambridge and watching their awkwardness under arms and the general slovenliness, which he was perpetually endeavoring to correct, he had not much ground for hope that his troops would act with decision at critical times. The reports he received of the conduct of the men in Canada, under Montgomery and Arnold, helped to confirm the opinion he had formed of them. "Place them behind a parapet, a breastwork stone wall or anything that will afford them shelter, and, from their knowledge of a firelock, they will give a good account of their enemy; but I am as well convinced as if I had seen it, that they will not march boldly up to a work, not stand exposed in a plain."

Yet, if he could get a sufficient number of men, enough powder and equipment and the river would freeze over "for these three things are necessary, something must be done. The men must be brought to face danger; they cannot always have an intrenchment or a stone wall as a safe guard or shield; and it [is] of essential importance, that the troops in Boston should be destroyed if possible before they can be reinforced or removed. This is clearly my opinion. Whether circumstances will admit of the trial, and, if tried, what will be the event, the all-wise Disposer of them alone can tell."⁴ Such uncertainty as to the fighting quality of the troops makes it certain that Washington's contemplated attack on Boston could only have been planned as a surprise, and a surprise, if successful, would overbalance every lack in the attackers.

Another tangle over which Washington had to worry, nearly caused the failure of the Revolution. As early as the beginning of 1776 he was bitterly aware of it. In this same letter to Reed he wrote that

The evils arising from short, or even any limited enlistment of the troops are greater, and more extensively hurtful than any person (not an eye-witness to them) can form any idea of. It takes you two to three months to bring new men in any tolerable degree acquainted with their duty; it takes a longer time to bring a people of the temper and genius of these into such a subordinate way of thinking as is necessary for a soldier, before this is accomplished, the time approaches for their dismissal, and you are beginning to make interest for their continuance for another limited period; in the doing of which you are obliged to relax your discipline, in order as it were to curry favor with them, by which means the latter part of your time is employed in undoing what the first was accomplishing, and instead of having men always ready to take advantages of circumstances, you must govern your movements by the circumstances of your enlistment. This is not all, by the time you have got men armed and equipped, the difficulty of doing which is beyond description, and with every new set you have the same trouble to encounter, without the means of doing it, in short the disadvantages are so great and apparent to me, that I am convinced, uncertain as the continuance of the war is, that Congress had better determine to give a bounty of 20, 30, or even 40 Dollars to every man who will enlist for the whole time be it long or short. [The army had not] been able to act upon the Offensive, and at times not in a condition to defend, yet the cost of marching home one set of Men; bringing in another; the havock and waste occasioned by the first; the repairs necessary for the Second, with a thousand incidental charges and Inconveniencies which have arisen, and which it is scarce possible either to recollect or describe, amounts to near as much as the keeping up a respectable body of Troops the whole time, ready for any emergency, would have done. To this may be added that you never can have a well Disciplined Army. . . . To bring Men well acquainted with the Duties of a Soldier, requires time; to bring them under proper discipline and Subordination, not only requires time, but is a Work of great difficulty; and in this Army, where there is so little distinction between the Officers

and Soldiers, requires an uncommon degree of attention. To expect then the same Service from Raw, and undisciplined Recruits as from Veteran Soldiers, is to expect what never did, and perhaps never will happen. Men who are familiarized to danger, meet it without shrinking, whereas those who have never seen Service often apprehend danger where no danger is. Three things prompt Men to a regular discharge of their Duty in time of Action; natural bravery, hope of reward, and fear of punishment. The two first are common to the untutor'd, and the Disciplin'd Soldiers; but the latter, most obviously distinguishes the one from the other. A Coward, when taught to believe, that if he breaks his Ranks, and abandons his Colours, will be punished with Death by his own party, will take his chance against the Enemy; but the Man who thinks little of the one, and is fearful of the other, Acts from present feelings regardless of consequences.

Again, Men of a days standing will not look forward, and from experience we find, that as the time approaches for their discharge they grow careless of their Arms, Ammunition, Camp utensils &c. nay even the Barracks themselves have felt uncommon marks of Wanton depredation, and lays us under fresh trouble, and additional expence, in providing for every fresh sett; when we find it next to impossible to procure such Articles, as are absolutely necessary in the first instance.⁵

The remainder of the letter advanced the arguments of expense, the difficulty, already experienced, of raising one army while disbanding another, and the fact that even when obtained, the new army is composed of raw green troops. This common-sense plea for enlistments for the duration of the war Washington well knew was in opposition to the idea prevailing in Congress and he wrote that "If Congress should differ from me in Sentiment upon this point, I have only to beg that they will do me the justice to believe, that I have nothing more in view than what to me appears necessary to advance the public weal, although in the first Instance it will be attended with a capital expence."

The bogey of an American standing army tyranny was so vivid to the colonies that it appeared a fearsome threat, greater in its imaginary evils than the real and actual danger of the British Army. How much of this fear was deliberately fostered can not be known; some of it was undoubtedly

sincere, but some was, as undoubtedly, manufactured for anti-Washington purposes. The New England colonies were the leaders in this short term enlistment and militia idiocy, but by May of 1776, Congress had come to the point of recommending to Massachusetts and Connecticut that they enlist their troops for two years. John Adams, in his Autobiography (*Works*, Vol. III, p. 46) denied with evident heat the charges that he was opposed to enlisting men for the duration of the war and then went on to show that he was very "willing the General might obtain as many men as he possibly could, to enlist during the war, or during the longest period they could be persuaded to enlist for . . . but I contended that I knew the number to be obtained in this manner would be very small in New England, from whence almost the whole army was derived. A regiment might possibly be obtained, of the meanest, idlest, most intemperate and worthless but no more . . . tradesmen's sons and farmers' sons . . . and such men certainly would not enlist during the war, or for long periods, as yet. The service was too new; they had not yet become attached to it by habit. Was it credible that men who could get at home a better living, more comfortable lodgings more than double the wages in safety . . . would bind themselves during the war? I knew it to be impossible." Adams seemed unaware that he was indicting the patriotism and personal bravery of all New England in this statement. He then could not resist the characteristic Puritan fling at the outland middle states "where they imported from Ireland and Germany, so many transported convicts and redemptioners it was possible they might obtain some. let them try. I had no objection. But I warned them against depending on so improbable a resource for the defence of the country. Congress confessed the unanswerable force of this reasoning."

This remarkable, Adams-like refutation of the charge that he was opposed to enlistments for the period of the war makes it very clear that John Adams had much to do with the determination of Congress to stick to the short-term enlistment and the refusal to give Washington the kind of army he wanted (and, in the end, had to get) before he could win the war. It is a fair example of the befogging difficulties through which George Washington had to grope his way to victory.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE BRITISH LEAVE BOSTON—DEFENSE OF NEW YORK

“NEXT to the favour of divine providence, nothing is more essentially necessary to give this Army victory over all its enemies, than exactness of discipline, Alertness when on duty, and Cleanliness in their arms and persons.” Perhaps this was intended to take some of the edge off what immediately preceded it in the General Orders of February twenty-seventh, which emphatically informed the troops that any coward who should skulk or retreat without orders, in time of action, would be shot down, “Cowards having too frequently disconcerted the best form’d Troops by their dastardly behaviour.”

March 5, 1776, Dorchester Heights were fortified during the night and the British, at last, found themselves facing the hard choice of taking these works by storm at once, or evacuating the town, for Washington’s artillery could now batter Boston about their ears and destroy the British fleet by a plunging fire, which the ships could not return effectively. Admiral Shulldham refused to hold his vessels in such a position of peril and Howe at once ordered his troops into flatboats for an assault. But before the first detachment could cross the bay a violent northeaster swept down and raged for two days and a night; no boats could live in that storm and when the wind subsided Howe felt that the Americans had so strengthened their works that a successful assault was too great a risk. Again the memory of Bunker Hill helped America and Howe decided to evacuate Boston, to the dismay and panic of the large number of Tory inhabitants in the town.

It seems to have been forgotten that Washington had planned against every imaginable contingency in case of the expected British assault. At the Dorchester breastworks Bunker Hill would have been reenacted with even greater slaughter but, far more important than this was the fact that arrangements had been made and orders given for the grand assault on Boston, as soon as the British were well engaged with the attack at Dor-

chester. General Sullivan was to land at the Powder House and gain possession of Beacon Hill and Mount Horam; Greene was to land at or near Barton's Point, join Sullivan in forcing the British lines and make an opening for the troops to advance from Roxbury. The plan was clean cut and simple and when all the factors are weighed the destruction of the British Army seems an almost inevitable result. The haste of the British to push their plans for evacuating Boston became plainly evident from Dorchester as soon as the idea of an assault had been given up. "I will not lament or repine," Washington again wrote to Reed, "at any act of Providence because I am in a great measure a convert to Mr. Pope's opinion,¹ that whatever is, is right, but I think everything had the appearance of a successful issue had we come to an engagement that day." And "this remarkable interposition of Providence is for some wise purpose, I have not a doubt" he wrote to his brother, though he could scarce forbear lamenting the disappointment because he believed that the event would have been the total defeat of the British. This belief was not fantastic.

Howe's troops were allowed to depart unmolested, as Washington was wise and calm enough to accept the issue without pushing vaingloriously to useless slaughter in an action that would have destroyed Boston as a consequence. The end of the long siege of nine months saw the Commander-in-Chief as steady in victory as he had been through all the tribulations of the wearing approach to that end.

The British evacuated Boston, March 17, 1776, and Washington's General Orders on that day fixed the parole as "Boston" and the countersign as "St. Patrick." In the haste and confusion the loss and destruction of stores by the retreating enemy were enormous. Cannon were hastily spiked, ammunition carts and army wagons were superficially hacked and dumped overboard into the harbor and all manner of stores and supplies, to the estimated value of thirty thousand pounds, were left behind. In writing to his brother, John Augustine, Washington described it as a destruction worse than that of Dunbar's stores after Braddock's defeat, which had made so much noise at the time. The shock to the British Tories, by the sudden decision to evacuate the town, was tremendous. Washington wrote that "the last Trump, could not have struck them with greater consternation. They were at their wits end, and conscious of their black ingratitude chose to commit themselves in the manner I have above de-

scrib'd to the Mercy of the Waves at a tempestuous Season rather than meet their offended Countrymen." They could not find shipping enough to accommodate all of them, for the King's ships were not numerous enough and they were forced, many of them, to hunt around for vessels and for seamen to navigate them, for Howe could not or would not obtain seamen for them from the British Navy ships. "One or two have done what a great many ought to have done long ago, committed Suicide. By all Accts. there never existed a more miserable set of beings than these wretched Creatures now are; taught to believe that the power of Great Britain was superior to all opposition, and that foreign aid (if not) was at hand, they were even higher and more insulting in their opposition, than the Regulars." There is as much pity as censure in this description, and a few days later (April first) Washington wrote to Joseph Reed: "Unhappy wretches! Deluded Mortals! Would it not be good policy to grant a general amnesty, and conquer these people by a generous forgiveness?" Had there not been so many loyalists throughout all the thirteen colonies it is probable that the patriot feeling of scorn and hatred would have been less intense; as it was, their number was at all times and in all locations sufficient to make them more or less of a menace, which did not tend to lessen the bitterness with which they were regarded and treated. There were over one thousand loyalists in Boston who, with their effects, had to be provided for. Howe's troops amounted to eighty-nine hundred and when the British put to sea their fleet and the Tory transports numbered seventy-eight vessels of various kinds.

The moment the British intention to evacuate became known, a council of war was called, at which it was decided to begin at once to march the troops by detachments toward New York City, as that place undoubtedly would be the next point of attack. After Howe's troops were all embarked on the fleet, the ships dropped down the bay where they lingered some days, instead of putting to sea. Washington's conjecture as to the reason for this puzzling delay was that the ships had been loaded so hastily that it would be dangerous for them to attempt a voyage without restowing their cargoes, but he did not reject the possibility that Howe might make a sudden dash back to Boston, should he think the Americans off their guard.

The British finally sailed from Boston Bay, but it was to Halifax and

not to New York. The Nova Scotia port was recognized by Washington as a possible destination, because of Howe's encumbered condition with the Tory refugees. The British played the old military trick on withdrawing from their Bunker Hill fort, in the night of March sixteenth, by leaving dummy sentinels at the usual posts. Washington took possession of the town the next morning, by sending in a body of troops who had already had the smallpox and so were in no danger of starting an epidemic of that dreaded disease which had raged in Boston during the siege.

There was a natural outburst of rejoicing over the evacuation. On the motion of John Adams, Congress voted its thanks to Washington and a medal, in gold, was ordered to be struck and presented to him (he did not receive it until nine years later); Harvard College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Letters and the Legislature of Massachusetts gave him a public dinner at the Bunch of Grapes tavern and presented an address, to which he replied with "sincere and hearty thanks" saying that he wished "for no other reward, than that arising from a conscientious discharge of the important trust, and that my services contribute to the establishment of freedom and peace, upon a permanent foundation, and merit the applause of my countrymen and every virtuous citizen." He ended with a prayer for the welfare of "the whole of the United Colonies" in such form as to rouse a tiny suspicion that his emphasis of union on this occasion was deliberate and intentional.

It was somewhat ironic too that he was plagued immediately by the efforts of Massachusetts to retain a larger force of troops to guard Boston than was necessary and, as soon as he reached New York, complaints followed him that the officers left in command at Boston (though they were New England men) were neglecting the work of erecting fortifications. He met this matter with tactful reassurance and with a sharp letter or two to the officers in charge of the fortification work. He was also overwhelmed by a flood of claims for payment for supplies furnished during the siege and for the services of troops, most of which he referred to Congress. His letter to Reed, April first, touched upon two of the Massachusetts generals in a way that helps to explain the quizzical curve noticeable in the lips of the Houdon portrait bust at Mount Vernon. General Artemas Ward resigned and then retracted his resignation because of its being disagreeable to some of the officers.

Who these officers are I have not heard [Washington wrote, then he added dryly] and I have not enquired . . . I shall leave him until he can determine yea or nay to command in this quarter. General Fry, that wonderful man, has made a most wonderful hand of it. His appointment took place the eleventh of January; he desired ten days ago, that his resignation might take place the 11th April. He has drawn three hundred and seventy-five dollars, never done one day's duty, scarce been three times out of his house, discovered that he was too old and too infirm for a moving camp, but remembers that he has been young, active and very capable of doing what is now out of his power to accomplish; and therefore has left Congress to find out another man capable of making, if possible, a more brilliant figure than he has done.

Before the middle of April Washington arrived in New York and encountered conditions which required much diplomacy and tact. General Charles Lee's difficulties with the loyalists had prepared Washington to some extent but he did not anticipate finding an unrestricted intercourse existing between the inhabitants of New York City and the British warships then lying in New York Bay. The trade whereby these ships were kept supplied with provisions had been flourishing ever since Governor Tryon had succeeded in arranging it in August, 1775. The New York Committee of Safety acceded to Washington's request to put a stop to this practise by passing a resolve, April 19, 1776, prohibiting intercourse with the British ships under pain of being considered an enemy to the liberties of America and subject to being treated as such.

Unaware of the reasons why the British did not immediately appear off New York harbor, Washington busied himself with the difficult task of obtaining arms for his troops, the enforcement of discipline and the development of the system of defenses for New York City. Long Island, the fortification works on Brooklyn Heights, Manhattan Island and the works at Kingsbridge, Staten Island and the Jersey shore of the Hudson seem to have been considered the principal points for resistance. Barricades were erected in the streets of New York, leading up from the water, as it was thought these would have some value if the British attempted to carry the town by storm. Washington, it should be remembered, had served upon a committee of the Continental Congress before he was appointed com-

mander-in-chief, which considered the question of defending New York City and now he was summoned by Congress to Philadelphia to consult upon plans for the campaign.

It seems to have been Washington's thought that the main opposition to the British would have to be made on the west bank of the Hudson. The creation of that unusual military organization known as the Flying Camp is an evidence that there existed another idea of campaign than that of holding Manhattan Island. Had this idea been allowed to become the main one of 1776 the story of the Revolution would have been entirely different. As it was, Washington, shaking himself loose from a complicated situation by a fortunate victory at Boston, came to New York, only to find himself plunged again into another impossible one created for him, and practically ordered by his superiors (Congress), to defend the impossible with inadequate means.

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CHAPTER XXXV

CANADA—NEW YORK LOYALISTS—HESSIANS—INDIANS— CAVALRY—THE HICKEY PLOT

THE campaign against Canada which caused Washington so much trouble and anxiety and which resulted so disastrously to the arms and prestige of the colonies, was in reality a wiser strategic move than was realized at the time. Channing points out¹ that the enterprise and temerity of the Americans in invading the British dominion created more of a stir in London than did the siege of Boston. It should not be forgotten also that to the British the amazing effrontery of the American expedition against Canada established the vulnerability of that country so clearly that in all the empire's war plans made thereafter, the protection of Canada was an element that demanded consideration. It was partly this idea that sent Burgoyne's force up the St. Lawrence, instead of to New York direct, delayed at Halifax reinforcements for Howe, divided his army and, instead of concentrating at New York City a force sufficient to conquer and hold the middle colonies, almost necessarily brought about the march of Burgoyne from Canada. Of course Burgoyne's personal influence with the King was a factor in all these arrangements, but without the American threat against Canada, there would have been no reason for sending a crown favorite there, to march hundreds of miles through the wilderness toward New York.

The small fortifications erected on the northern part of Manhattan Island and the barricades erected in the streets of the city leading from the water-front, under General Charles Lee's direction, do not seem to have figured prominently in Washington's mind as important defensive elements. The efforts to obstruct the navigation of the Hudson by sinking cheveaux-de-frise and hulks in the channel at the north end of New York Island had Washington's approval, but to his great disappointment, the event demonstrated that no reliance could be placed upon such things. His letters show plainly that he thoroughly understood the immense ad-

vantage the British possessed by their command of the sea, which is the reason why he was willing to try any reasonable means to neutralize this. If his efforts appear to us as those of an unenlightened landsman, it must be remembered that he took the advice of those who were supposed to know about hulks and cheveaux-de-frise and his mistakes are balanced by the fact that the British did not use their sea power with any great intelligence, nor to the best possible advantage.

Washington went to Philadelphia, in answer to the summons from Congress, but the conference with that body to settle upon a plan of campaign is, unfortunately, not of record. It is hardly possible that the question of making a stand at New York City, of moving farther up the Hudson, or of crossing that river to more favorable ground should not have been well debated. The delegates from New York were strenuously opposed to evacuating the city and equally opposed to destroying it to prevent its furnishing winter quarters for the British. The political power of New York State was adamant in insisting on the defense of New York City and one of the most strenuous objectors to either evacuation or destruction, was Brigadier-General George Clinton, who later became governor of the state. The mere fact that the question was fought so vigorously in the councils of war which Washington held upon the subject, is evidence of the strength of the opinion that the city should be destroyed, against what Washington knew to be the desire of Congress to preserve it. The New Yorkers could not bring themselves to make such a sacrifice for the national good and, having defeated in Congress the idea of destruction, they next succeeded in binding Washington to the defense of an indefensible town. It is evident that Washington did not consider it possible to hold Manhattan Island against the combined British naval and military forces. He did what was possible with his troops and his material, but the result was not a brilliant, nor even a strong defense, and it should be remembered that the main lines of this defense, like that of Boston, had been settled upon before Washington arrived on the scene.

New York City, in fact, only figured in Washington's calculations as the seaport entrance to Hudson River and it was Hudson River that was vital to the colonies and not its seaport entrance. The control of the river in the interior was the main necessity and not the control of its mouth. Had not Washington been forced to a defense of New York City by the polit-

ical situation and fortifications already erected, he would have left Manhattan Island a ruin and forced the British to revise their entire plan of operations.

In the long wait before the arrival of the first part of the British force in the lower bay, Washington examined the ground on Long and Staten Islands and both sides of the Hudson River as high up as Tappan Sea, to map out the best means of defense. It was during this time that he wrote to Congress urging the employment of Indians on the side of the colonies. This employment of Indians seems to be misunderstood. Time and again Washington had warned Congress that if it did not hire or win the Indians over to its side, they would be used, as they were being used at the time, by the British. Indians, Washington knew, would not remain neutral and even though their services to the colonies were very slight, the expense was justified if it kept them from joining the British colors. The much criticized act of employing the Indians against the British, even though the British did not hesitate to employ them against the colonies, is not properly criticizable for it was nothing more than judicious bribery to protect the American settlers from the tomahawk and scalping knife. Certainly the total military result of the employment of savages by the Congress was practically nil, if unconnected cases of local raids are not considered. Of course the border warfare was stimulated to greater activity, but it is questionable if the opportunities for Indian raids created by the war would not have caused fully as much savage activity, whether the Indians were hired or not.

The first contingent of Britain's might arrived in New York Bay from Halifax, in June, under the command of Sir William Howe. It had been preceded by the news that England had hired troops from Hesse and Hanover, which had roused the bitterest feeling in the colonies. It was really cheaper, in a financial way, for Britain to hire mercenaries than to raise an army of natives; but in every other way it proved to be a very expensive move. Being professional soldiers operating for hire only, the German troops went at their job with the indifference of hired men; they operated with the stolid lack of enthusiasm that was to be expected and while they fought bravely enough they were not forward in developing opportunities for victories. They obeyed orders and seldom went one step beyond that point, while the hatred, fear and antagonism their hiring

roused in the colonies more than offset the military advantage which Great Britain expected from their services. Then too the German rank and file were far from being the brutal savages the colonists thought them to be. From the prisoner-of-war camps at Lancaster, York and Charlottesville, German mechanics and artisans were hired out to the American country people, who slowly began to realize that these soldiers were good-humored human beings. Efforts, unofficial as well as official, were made to win these men from their allegiance to Britain; land and exemption from military service were dangled before their eyes and a large number succumbed to the allurements and deserted. Every such deserter, though he did not add to the strength of the Continental Army's man power directly, reduced the man power of the British Army and so was a positive gain, and as many of these mercenaries were men of the soil, their farm lands, which they immediately started to cultivate, added to the supplies available for the American forces.

The General Orders of the period show how greatly the army lacked discipline, military knowledge, supplies and, to some extent, patriotism, as there was a small but steady trickle of desertions, for which the penalty of thirty-nine lashes on the bare back was an entirely inadequate punishment.

Idleness and deceitfulness of the armorers in their work of repairing damaged arms was a crying complaint;² and there was an amazing embezzlement of tools of all kinds. To stop this Washington ordered the Quartermaster-General to stamp every article "C XIII" which was an excellent device for "Colonies Thirteen." This was ordered a little over three weeks before the Declaration of Independence made it possible to use thereafter the concrete symbol of U. S. A.

Officers were slack in their duty, though some of this was to be attributed to greenness, and one ungallant lieutenant beat a fair lady of New York "without provocation," for which he was promptly cashiered and twenty dollars, stopped from the pay due him, given to the young woman as damages.

It was in the month of June, while waiting the arrival of the British at New York, that Washington suggested and urged on Congress the establishment of a War Office. The suggestion was adopted, but instead of that office becoming, as Washington expected, an organization that would ex-

pedite, simplify and increase the efficiency of the military machine, it became an instrument which was used by Washington's enemies to thwart and block his efforts and in the end it became the stronghold of the infamous Conway Cabal.

In June, also, the first activity toward establishing cavalry, or dragoons, as a military arm is to be noted, though Washington's use of cavalry during the war has been disappointing to many critics of his military policy. But it is difficult to see how, when all the factors are duly weighed, he could have used the dragoons more often than he did. They were always on the lines, acting as scouting forces, as pickets, videttes and gatherers of intelligence. Their discipline and military ability was as poor as that of the infantry and Washington was not at all confident that they could hold their own against the trained and disciplined British horse. But the principal weakness was the extreme difficulty in obtaining sufficient equipment. The cost of the upkeep of a cavalry troop is generally figured as twice that of an infantry regiment and the staggering difficulties of the upkeep of the infantry need only be remembered to make plain the situation as regards the cavalry. To the military mind, Washington had by 1777-78 four regiments of dragoons and little use was made of them, from the view-point of a cavalry critic. But the cavalry critic sees only the four regiments of dragoons. He does not see the things that are impossible of existence to-day, but which were main factors during the Revolution. The dragoons were largely paper organizations. The difficulty and expense of their maintenance were usually beyond accomplishment. The equipment of saddles, bridles, swords, carbines, etc., more frequently than otherwise was scant, forage was so hard to obtain that the dragoons were seldom able to find quarters near the rest of the army. This naturally interfered with the exact coordination of the horse with the infantry and in every case where it was difficult to move the foot soldier for lack of supplies, the same and greater difficulties attended movements of the cavalry. It is too frequently forgotten that much of Washington's apparent neglect to take advantage of military opportunities was due to failure of supplies and not to his military ineptitude and blindness. The blindness is in his critics.

Before the British arrived at New York the city was thrown into a tur-

moil of excitement by the discovery of a plot in which one Thomas Hickey, a member of the Commander-in-Chief's guard, was implicated and which was reported to have had for its purpose the assassination of Washington. The letters of various people, then in New York, who wrote to their friends the details of the story, are as extravagantly incorrect as those written from the army at the time of the discovery of Arnold's treason, and the credulousness of a few historians has fastened these exaggerations all too firmly in the public mind. The official record contains no evidence of any assassination plot, but is as complete as the other court-martial records of the time with proof of Hickey's efforts to enlist men for service with the British. These recruits were to be prepared to act when Sir William Howe arrived at New York. Hickey was a deserter from the British Army and if, as was likely, he had begun to fear that Howe would easily defeat and scatter the American Army, his fate was sealed. He testified at his trial that he engaged in the scheme at first for the sake of cheating the Tories and getting money from them, which is at least plausible, and afterward consented to have his name sent to one of the British men-of-war in the harbor in order to insure his safety, should the British Army defeat the Americans. This is quite likely the truth. But the court convicted him of sedition and mutiny and of holding a treacherous correspondence with the enemy, which also is the undoubted fact. The situation in New York City at this time was peculiar. The Tory element was strong, the mercantile class were either Tory or apathetic toward the Revolution; the governing class was by no means enthusiastically patriotic; political co-operation with the rest of the colonies for the good of the whole was rather conspicuously absent and, lastly, New York's delegates in the Continental Congress voted against the independence resolution of Richard Henry Lee, on July 1, 1776. The sum total of the Hickey affair seems to have been that it was absolutely necessary to make an example of the dangers of disloyalty and, though under the Continental Articles of War, Hickey deserved death, it was the more necessary to execute him on account of the Toryism then rampant in New York City.³ The assassination part of the story is merely the fantastic embroidering of excited rumor which furnished matter for street and table gossip and lacks confirmatory evidence.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE BRITISH ARRIVE—THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE—HOWE'S LETTER TO "MR. WASHINGTON"

IN THE first week in July, 1776, Sir William Howe had assembled more than one hundred vessels in New York harbor. He had intended landing in Gravesend Bay, but thinking it too hazardous, debarked his troops on Staten Island without opposition. His force totaled about thirty-two thousand men and to Washington, who had less than nine thousand, there seemed little chance of making an effective opposition. His position was the more trying because it was so plainly evident that political reasons were making it necessary for him to sacrifice his army in behalf of a lukewarm city, instead of being able to retreat to a position where the nature of the ground would handicap the superior British force. The high ground around Kingsbridge appeared to be such a position and to that ground, in the end, he was forced to retreat. Some idea may be had of his state of mind on a plan of action, by his orders to prepare fascines and other movable defenses with which to block the sally-ports of the various fortifications on Manhattan Island and orders to mark off circles of small brush around the several redoubts as the distance to which the British were to be allowed to approach before opening fire upon them. The orders of July second show his effort to inspire the troops with battle zeal:

The time is now near at hand which must probably determine, whether Americans are to be, Freeman or Slaves; whether they are to have any property they can call their own; whether the Houses and Farms, are to be pillaged and destroyed, and they consigned to a State of Wretchedness. . . . the fate of unborn Millions will now depend, under God, on the Courage and Conduct of this army. . . . We have therefore to resolve to conquer or die. . . . The Eyes of all our Countrymen are now upon us, and we shall have their blessings, and praises, if happily we are the instruments of saving them from the Tyranny meditated against them. Let us, therefore animate and

encourage each other, and shew the whole world, that a Freeman contending for LIBERTY on his own ground is superior to any slavish mercenary on earth.

Brave words! And equal to any of the heroics found in the *Tragedy of Cato*. Indeed though they have something of Addisonian flavor, there can be no doubt of the earnestness of this exhortation for, with barely nine thousand men against thirty-two thousand, there was need of all the morale uplift possible. Washington had already called for militia reinforcements, but these assembled slowly and he well knew that militia were a doubtful element in combat with trained troops.

The days that elapsed between the landing of the British on Staten Island and their first definite move toward the city of New York, were filled with hard work and overwhelming anxiety for Washington. He strove to round his small army into shape and his orders during the period are a continual emphasis of precaution against surprise, cleaning of arms, arrangement of signals and disciplining of troops. He strove to perfect every point that would increase the efficiency of his army and issued strict orders as to personal cleanliness and the sanitation of the barracks. Meanwhile the thirty-nine lashes were being regularly laid on bare backs, though they seemed to have but slight effect in holding down desertions.

Later on, in the year 1777, the Articles of War were amended and desertion was made punishable with death, but even then the extreme penalty was meted out sparingly and capital punishment, in early court-martial convictions under the new Articles, was set aside on one excuse or another. The combination of Washington's dislike of approving the death sentences of the court and his clear understanding of the effect of severity upon recruiting, operated to hold the death penalty down to a low figure. Washington well knew the types and characteristics of the men in the ranks and they had his sympathy and good-will at all times. He made every allowance for them and became the stern, cold commander-in-chief only when the offenses jeopardized the cause.

But for a long, long time Washington's plans and calculations were all directed toward the elemental problem of raising a sufficient number of men to form an army, a task full of disappointment and difficulty. A new bother was the slippery practise of soldiers enlisting into a regiment, collecting the bounty and then going off to another regiment and enlisting

over again. Such actions, coupled with the desertions and inattention to duty brought Washington's indignation to the boiling point, though he had to restrain his rage and only request "most earnestly of every officer who loves his Country," not only to expose that practise of soldiers enlisting from one corps to another, but to make the offenders known, that they might be brought to justice. Even the countersigns, through ignorance or misconduct, were not kept secret, but allowed to be known to some who had no right to know them.

Jealousy and ill-feeling arose between the troops of the different states and Washington's orders of August first deplored the injury to "the noble cause in which we are engaged, and which we ought to support with one hand and heart." He called attention to the fact that there was

no way to assist our cruel enemies more effectually, than making division among ourselves; the Honor and Success of the Army, the safety of our bleeding Country depend upon the harmony and good agreement with each other; that the Provinces are all United to oppose the common enemy, and all distinctions sunk in the name of an American; to make this honorable and preserve the liberty of our Country, ought to be our only emulation, and he will be the best Soldier, and the best Patriot, who contributes most to this glorious work whatever his Station, or from whatever part of the Continent he may come; Let all distinctions of Nations, Countries, and Provinces, therefore be lost in the generous contest, who shall behave with the most courage against the Enemy, and the most kindness and good humour to each other.

This was a sincere exhortation but the touch of human nature that followed merits a smile, "If there are any officers or soldiers, so lost to virtue and a love of their Country as to continue in such practices after this order; the General assures them, and is directed by Congress to declare, to the whole Army, that such persons shall be severely punished and dismissed the service with disgrace."

On August third Washington ordered the cessation of all fatigue duty on Sundays, except in special necessary cases, so that the troops might have the opportunity of attending public worship and the orders hoped that the officers would endeavor to check "the foolish, and wicked, prac-

tice of profane swearing" which was growing in the army, by example and influence. "Both they and the men will reflect" he ordered "that we can have but little hopes of the blessing of Heaven on our Arms, if we insult it by our impiety, and folly; added to this it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense, and character, detests and despises it."

The matter of uniforms had already proved bothersome, for the army had not been able to obtain any as late as the middle of the year 1776; indeed the entire year of 1777 slipped by without any noticeable progress being made toward solving this problem. It was not easy for America to accumulate a stock of colored cloth sufficient to put her regiments into regulation clothing, and the matter of uniform, in 1776, was soon swallowed in the more important and elemental question of clothing of any kind. This necessity became so pressing that all the cloth on hand was made up, regardless of colors, and issued to the troops promiscuously; at that, it was not sufficient to protect the men from great suffering.

The Declaration of Independence was announced to the troops by the Commander-in-Chief in the General Orders of July ninth:

The Hon. The Continental Congress, impelled by the dictates of duty, policy and necessity, having been pleased to dissolve the Connection which subsisted between this Country, and Great Britain, and to declare the United Colonies of North America, free and Independent STATES: The several brigades are to be drawn up this evening on their respective Parades, at Six OClock, when the declaration of Congress, shewing the grounds and reasons of the measure, is to be read with an audible voice. The General hopes this important Event will serve as a fresh incentive to every officer and soldier, to act with Fidelity and Courage, as knowing that now the peace and safety of his Country depends (under God) solely on the success of our arms; And that he is now in the Service of a State, possessed of sufficient power to reward his merit, and advance him to the highest Honors of a free Country.

In his letter to Congress reporting this reading of the Declaration Washington wrote (July tenth), "If our Troops behave well, which I hope will be the case, having everything to contend for that Freeman hold dear, they

[the British] will have to wade through much Blood and Slaughter before they carry our Works, if they can carry them at all; and at best be in possession of a Melancholy and Mournfull Victory."

The orders proclaiming the Declaration of Independence were preceded by directions to appoint a chaplain to each regiment, as permission for this had been granted by Congress. "Persons of good Character and exemplary lives" were to be chosen and all officers and men were ordered to pay them proper respect and to attend carefully upon religious exercises. "The blessing and protection of Heaven are at all times necessary but especially so in times of public distress and danger. The General hopes and trusts that every officer and man, will endeavor so to live and act, as becomes a Christian Soldier defending the dearest Rights and Liberties of his Country." The juxtaposition of these religious orders with those publishing the Declaration of Independence can be nothing more than a coincidence, but they curiously substantiate the blending, in Washington's mind, of liberty, God and religion.

The carefulness with which General George Washington guarded the honor and prestige of the newly fledged United States created a situation, soon after the Declaration of Independence, that has an element of humor, for all that it was treated with such serious earnestness by both British and Americans. In the perfectly childish attempt to inveigle Washington into an acknowledgment of inferiority to the British forces, Sir William Howe addressed a letter "To George Washington, Esquire" and sent it to New York in care of a British officer, under a flag of truce. Just what advantage would have accrued to the British had Washington accepted the letter is hypothetical; that Howe expected something from it, goes without saying and it is conceivable that in opening a correspondence which pointedly ignored the military status or authority of the American Commander-in-Chief, some disadvantages in official relationships would have developed. It is curious, however, that it was the gesture of the British toward peace and the character of peace commissioner, in which Howe acted, which defeated the purpose of this letter. The British flag-boat bearing the letter was stopped offshore by an American guard-boat and word sent in that a letter bearing such an address would be presented. A consultation of general officers decided that no letter ought to be received by the Commander-in-Chief if addressed to him as a private individual. The

foresight of Washington even in such apparently small points, which might, later, develop into big ones, indicates the ability of the man to handle the most complicated of situations. Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Reed was sent down to look into the matter and, regardless of Reed's characteristics in other respects, it was the kind of thing he was particularly fitted to handle. Handle it he did, with dignity and emphasis. The British flag officer was informed that there was no such person as "George Washington, Esquire" in the army; that any letter intended for the General and Commander-in-Chief could not be received under such a direction. The Briton expressed great concern and said that the letter was more of a civil than of a military nature and displayed an evident anxiety to have the letter accepted. This not being possible, the flag-boat started back, but after having rowed a little distance returned and the British officer asked under what title, General, then catching himself, Mr. Washington chose to be addressed. Colonel Reed replied that the General's rank and station were well known and no one could be at a loss how to address him. The British officer acknowledged that this was so and they lamented it, and asked again if the letter could not be received. He again met with a refusal and the little scene of diplomatic fencing came to an end with the honors resting with America. Throughout the remainder of the war the British Commanders-in-Chief addressed their letters to General George Washington.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY DEFENSE OF NEW YORK— BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND

SIR HENRY CLINTON's force arrived at New York from Charleston, August first, and with this augmentation of his army Sir William Howe began preparations for the long expected attack upon the city. New York was indefensible from a joint land and sea attack by a superior force and no one knew this better than Washington. His spies informed him of the enemy's intention of landing above the city and hemming in his army on Manhattan Island and this, he also knew full well, could not be stopped. "We expect a very bloody Summer of it," he wrote to his brother John Augustine, the last day of May, "at New York and Canada as it is there I expect the grand effort of the Enemy will be aim'd; and I am sorry to say that we are not, either in Men or Arms, prepared for it." He had nearly sixteen miles of lines to defend, with less than ten thousand men and most of these militia, against thirty thousand trained British soldiers, backed by a powerful fleet, which enabled them to attack suddenly at any point on that sixteen-mile line. Still Washington did not despair, but wrote "that if our cause is just, which I do most religiously believe it to be, the same Providence which has in many Instances appear'd for us, will still go on to afford its aid."

It is difficult for the present-day American to understand George Washington, simply because of this elemental faith in liberty. With him there was no thought of compromise or defeat. Liberty, the liberty for which he was fighting, could not be defeated and such reverses as that of Long Island were mere incidents; defeats were only temporary setbacks at the worst, while victories were longer or shorter steps forward on the road. Both victories and defeats were merely elements of the problem which would not be solved until liberty had been secured. It was this that gained the ultimate victory, the ability to keep the main point steadily in mind and to bend every occurrence toward gaining that point. John

Witherspoon, of New Jersey, understood and voiced the thought in his speech on Howe's peace proposals, in September, 1776, in the Continental Congress: "As if this cause," said he, "depended upon one battle which could not be avoided. Sir, this is a prodigious mistake. We may fight no battle at all for a long time, or we may lose some battle . . . and the cause notwithstanding be the same."

For Washington the proper thing seemed to be to withdraw all his forces from Manhattan Island and concentrate them in a compact group, north of Harlem River and compel the British to fight him on chosen ground (neither Long Island nor New York City was this) for the possession of the Hudson River. In this America would have a chance. But he had been restricted to the defense of New York City by what he considered the supreme authority of America and, regardless of the motives actuating that authority, he prepared to do his duty ungrudgingly and to the best of his ability.

It is not possible to separate the military maneuvers of the defense of New York from the political maneuvers which brought the Continental Congress into agreement with the New York influences which demanded that the city be defended at all hazards. When politics are mixed with battles no logical analysis of the military effort can be made. The decision to defend New York was a product of the maneuvers in Congress in May and June, 1775, and the conference of that body with Washington and Gates in May, 1776, but the exact path by which that decision was reached can not now be clearly traced.

That Washington was not lukewarm in defending the place is much clearer. On August ninth his orders exhorted "Every man, both officer and soldier, to be prepared for action, to have his arms in the best order, not to wander from his encampment or quarters; to remember what their Country expects of them, what a few brave men have lately done in South Carolina, against a powerful Fleet and Army; to acquit themselves like men and with the blessing of heaven on so just a Cause we cannot doubt of success." The touch on the repulse of the British fleet at Fort Moultrie was clever, and throughout the war it is to be noted that Washington's general orders to the troops have many such touches. The Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Armies knew human nature.

After this appeal, another was made on the thirteenth to "remember

that Liberty, Property, Life and Honor, are all at stake; that upon their Courage and Conduct, rest the hopes of their bleeding and insulted Country; that their Wives, Children and Parents, expect Safety from them only, and that we have every reason to expect Heaven will crown with Success so just a cause. The enemy will endeavor to intimidate by shew . . . but . . . their Cause is bad; their men are conscious of it, and if opposed with firmness and coolness, at their first onsett, with our advantage of Works and Knowledge of the Ground; Victory is most assuredly ours." Nevertheless, Washington packed up all his papers and sent them to Philadelphia, to the care of Congress, which is some indication of his judgment of the practicability of defending New York.

Only his sense of duty kept the idea of a stubborn resistance foremost in Washington's mind, otherwise it is doubtful if Nathanael Greene's arguments could have made him hesitate over risking Fort Washington, when he already believed that the post ought to be given up. He expressed this thought somewhat differently to Thomas McKean, August thirteenth: "If we should be beaten (our numbers among friends being unequal to those of the Enemy) it will not be, I flatter myself, till after some hard knocks; which will not be very soon recovered of by the Enemy." Then he rose above even this small pessimism: "But that superintending Providence, which needs not the aid of numbers, will lead us I hope to a more fortunate Event."

The disparity of force was as three to one in favor of the British and George Washington was well justified in his belief that Providence would have to intervene for liberty in the approaching battle.

The news of the peace proposals to America, borne by the two Howes, were circulated through the colonies before the armies came to grips and, of course, assumed fantastic proportions in the process. On August twentieth, Washington felt compelled to contradict rumors in the army that an offer of peace had been made, and the day before that he wrote to Lund Washington, then managing Mount Vernon, a common-sense analysis of the rumor. It shows clearly Washington's reasoning power:

Lord Howe takes pains to throw out, upon every occasion, that he is the Messenger of Peace; that he wants to accommodate matters, nay, has Insinuated, that he thinks himself authorized to do it upon

the terms mentioned in the last Petition to the King of G. Britain. But has the Nation got to that, that the King, or his Ministers will openly dispense with Acts of Parliament. And if they durst attempt it, how is it to be accounted for that after running the Nation to some Millions of Pounds Sterlg. to hire and Transport Foreigners, and before a blow is struck, they are willing to give the terms proposed by Congress before they, or we, had encountered the enormous expence that both are now run to. . . . I say, how is this to be accounted for but from their having received some disagreeable advices from Europe; or, by having some Manouvre in view which is to be effected by procrastination. What this can be the Lord knows, we are now passed the middle of August and they are in possession of an Island only, which it never was in our power, or Intention to dispute their Landing on. this is but a small step towards the Conquest of this Continent.

Three days later the British landed at Gravesend Bay and marched to Flatbush; Washington immediately reenforced Brooklyn with six regiments, which were about as many as he dared send, not knowing but that the fleet might move up with the flood tide and attack New York City. Greene, who was in command on Long Island, was down with a fever and Major-General John Sullivan had succeeded him for the time being. This proved an unfortunate circumstance, for Sullivan's weak spot, as demonstrated later on several other critical occasions was a proneness to neglect a careful watch of the enemy's movements. Four more regiments were sent over by Washington the next day on the receipt of further intelligence of the situation, but these were so handled as to be able to return to New York at once if the fleet moved up. Putnam was placed in command of the Brooklyn lines and Washington warned him specially to defend the piece of woods next to Red Hook, to prevent a surprise landing close to the Brooklyn works and in the rear of the hills along which the main body of the American forces were drawn up. There were but two points of attack for the British, Long Island or directly on some part of Manhattan. Howe chose Long Island, and as New York was to be defended, there was nothing for Washington to do but meet him there. To give up Long Island without a struggle would be to present the enemy with a country rich in food supplies. The possibility of a simultaneous attack

against both Manhattan and Long Island had to be guarded against until it was clear that the main British attack would be delivered on Long Island.

August twenty-seventh, the day of the British attack, five British war-ships attempted to beat up New York harbor against a head wind, to cannonade the Brooklyn defenses from the rear. Washington remained in New York City until it became evident that the wind was too strong for the ships to advance and as soon as this was clear the Commander-in-Chief crossed to Brooklyn and from those heights witnessed the rout of Sullivan and Stirling's troops. The ignorance of military science among the American officers and a carelessness which Washington had been daily reprimanding, was responsible for the criminal negligence that left undefended the important Jamaica Pass through the hills on the left wing of the American position. Through this pass Howe marched unnoticed and caught the American forces between his two detachments, both of which were superior in strength to the surprised Americans. Veteran troops are seldom able to withstand the shock of a heavy attack on their rear while engaged with a strong attack on their front and the American troops were far from being experienced veterans. The battle was an engagement fought by a detachment from the main army, under subordinate officers on whom Washington had to rely. In reporting the defeat to Congress, the same exigencies controlled his report that had compelled him to put the best face he could upon the situation before the battle occurred. General Washington's duty was to defend to the last, by every means in his power, the liberty of America, and his report of this battle was a part of that duty. The American losses on Long Island, in the absence of official returns which, if they at one time existed have not survived, appear to have approximated in killed, wounded, prisoners and missing, about one thousand men. Both Sullivan and Lord Stirling¹ were taken prisoners.

Howe did not follow up his victory with vigor. His losses were a little over three hundred and fifty in killed, wounded, prisoners and missing and, although his triumph was a sweeping one, the fortifications of Brooklyn Heights were still before him, the war-ships that were to take them in the rear were not in position, and nothing remained but to make a direct frontal attack upon works, the strength of which he had no means of

knowing. What he did know was that some of the troops he defeated that day had fought viciously and, with a smashing victory already to his credit, Howe may be pardoned for hesitating to risk another Bunker Hill, in which his victory might be forgotten in the welter of blood the British would pay by not waiting for the support of their ships. Once in position, these ships would not only make victory certain, but they would entirely cut off the American chance of retreat. It was logical for Howe to wait, even though after events proved the delay to have been a mistake.

August twenty-ninth was a wet miserable day, a steady drizzle seriously damaged the American ammunition and it probably did as much injury to the British powder also. Washington called a council of war, and it should be noted that throughout this campaign around New York City he fortified his every move by a council of war. Was this just coincidence or was Washington mindful of the politics behind the entire New York City defense? This council was not distinguished for the military wisdom of its members. Besides the Commander-in-Chief there were two major-generals, Putnam and Spencer; and six brigadiers: Miffin, Parsons, Wadsworth, McDougall, Scott and Fellows. The unanimous decision was that the army should be removed to New York City and eight reasons were given for the decision, when only one was necessary and, if proof is needed of the weight of the political considerations, which were not even alluded to, it may be sought in the existence of the two surviving records of this council: 1, The official minutes, in the writing of Washington's two aides, Robert Hanson Harrison and George Baylor and 2, A repetition of the unanimous decision of the council, in the writing of another aide, Tench Tilghman; this second document signed by every one of the generals except Washington. Here was the answer to a possible political investigation of the retreat.

The night of August twenty-ninth and the morning of the thirtieth Washington managed to ferry all the troops in the Brooklyn defenses across the East River to New York. His own report to Congress, August thirty-first, is a better picture than the compilations of others:

Inclination as well as duty, would have induced me to give Congress, the earliest information of my removal of the Troops from Long Island and its dependencies to this City, the night before last;

but the extreme fatigue which myself and family have undergone (as much from the Weather as anything else) since the incampment of the 27th, rendered me entirely unfit to take a pen in hand. Since Monday, we have scarce any of us been out of the Lines, till our passage across the East River was effected yesterday Morning, and for the 48 hours preceeding that; I had hardly been off my horse and had never closed my Eyes, so that I was quite unfit to write or dictate till this Morning.

Our Retreat was made without any loss of Men or Ammunition and in better order than I expected, from Troops in the Situation ours were; we brought off all our Cannon and Stores, except a few heavy pieces, (which in the condition the Earth was, by a long continued rain) we found upon trial impracticable; the Wheels of the Carriages sunk up to the Hobbs, and rendered it impossible for our whole force to drag them; We left but little Provisions on the Island, except some Cattle, which had been driven within our Lines and which after many attempts to force across the Water, we found impossible to effect.

The militia men immediately began to sneak off by way of Kingsbridge and an order was given to arrest all attempting to pass, who were without regular discharges from the service. The troops, of course, were discouraged and on August thirty-first Washington's General Orders informed them "that the Retreat from Long Island was made by the unanimous advice of all the General Officers, not from any doubts of the spirits of the troops, but because they found the men very much fatigued with hard duty and divided into many detachments, while the Enemy had their main Body on the Island, and capable of receiving assistance from the shipping; In these circumstances it was thought unsafe to transport the whole of any Army on an Island, or to engage them with a part, and therefore unequal numbers." The whole army was now consolidated and in better condition to fight than was the enemy, the orders stated, which was something of an exaggeration. The General hoped, however, that the officers would "gloriously determine to conquer or die. From the justice of our cause, the situation of the harbour and the bravery of her sons, America can only expect success. Now is the time for every man to exert himself, and make our Country glorious, or it will become contemptible."

In the Varick transcript of Washington's General Orders (officially made in 1781) these orders are indexed under the title of the army being "pathetically addressed." The description is apt.

The British began extending their lines eastward along the north shore of Long Island and it quickly became evident that another flanking movement must be met. But there was little to meet it with; the militia, after the disheartening defeat, began leaving in groups and whole companies at a time, as their term of service expired, and Washington's strength dwindled. He called for a thousand men from the Flying Camp in New Jersey to reenforce the troops in New York City and directed Mercer to make an attack, if practicable, on Staten Island, on the chance that such a move might disconcert the force on Long Island. He wrote Congress that "till of late I had no doubt in my own mind of defending this place, nor should I have yet, if the men would do their duty, but this I despair of. It is extremely grating to me to give such unfavourable Accounts, but it would be still more criminal to conceal the Truth at so critical a juncture."

In a letter to his brother Samuel, October fifth, Washington enlightens the defense of New York still further: "the Post was taken and the Works advanced, before I left Boston and . . . if our strength had been equal to the determination of Congress we should have had men enough to defend the City and secured the Communication, if their behaviour had been good." (That phrase "determination of Congress" is illuminating.)

The militia, as stated, had gone off in large numbers, after, as Washington so emphatically put it, infecting the regular troops with their lack of discipline and refusal to submit to almost any kind of restraint. "No dependence," he wrote, "could be in a Militia or other Troops than those enlisted and embodied for a longer period than our Regulations have heretofore prescribed. I am persuaded and as fully convinced, as I am of any one fact that has happened, that our Liberties must of necessity be greatly hazarded, If not entirely lost, If their defence is left to any but a permanent standing Army." In this letter to Congress, September 2, 1776, he demonstrated that the expense of a standing army would have been far less than that caused by the militia and suggested that a land bounty be offered for recruits who would enlist for a long term. Following out the thought of the impossibility of defending New York, he asked

if the town should be left standing to serve as winter quarters for the British, or whether it should be destroyed on evacuation. Congress, still under the influence which had handicapped Washington so disastrously, resolved that special care should be taken that no damage be done the city by the troops on leaving it "having no doubt of being able to recover the same, though the enemy should, for a time, obtain possession of it." A cheerful but unwarranted political optimism in the face of results already accruing from its own interference in military affairs. The large number of Tories in the city would have completely justified its destruction as a military measure, and the fact that from the time of its capture in 1776, the British conducted their entire operations of the rest of the war from New York as a base, more than justified Washington's opinion that it should be destroyed. In the face of Britain's overwhelming naval strength, it is impossible to imagine the workings of minds that believed Manhattan Island could either be held or recaptured, once the American troops were forced from the city. Washington's willingness to attempt the impossible in striving to hold the town has subjected him to sharp criticism but little of this criticism has an intelligent basis. That the Commander-in-Chief can be criticized for yielding too much to the wishes and directions of Congress seems evident to present-day critics, for it is difficult for us to understand Washington's entire acknowledgment of the complete power and control of Congress. George Washington's belief in the struggle for liberty placed Congress, in his mind, as the supreme civil power of the land and the civil, with Washington, was above all other power in the new governmental experiment then being tried. If we remember that, to George Washington, Congress was also an experiment in governmental liberty, it will not be so difficult to understand his attitude. Washington's willingness to concede and submit everything to the judgment of Congress was nothing but the logic of the ideal democrat, who felt justified in placing the responsibility for liberty upon the functioning of the only national governmental organization that the struggle for liberty had been able to create.

The retreat from Long Island has been hailed by both British and American historians as a wonderful feat, as indeed it was. The withdrawal of nearly eight thousand men, with all their baggage, supplies and artillery (a few of the heaviest guns and a number of cattle had to be left) from before the lines of a besieging enemy, less than two hundred yards

away, and the transportation of those troops across a wide river in twelve or thirteen hours of darkness, without the enemy being aware of the movement, was an unprecedented thing. No matter how much criticism is leveled at the British commander for his failure to interrupt this retreat, the fact remains that as a military movement it has had no equal in the history of America. The most remarkable thing about it is that it seems to have been Washington's personal, driving energy that made it a success, just as it was that same personal, driving force that pushed the Continental troops across the Delaware on Christmas Night of 1776. And, when we give this credit to Washington's personal energy, we must not forget the perfect cooperation he received from Major-General William Heath, that "obstinate, honest man" who, while he has no brilliant military successes to his credit, was valued by Washington as dependable. In this retreat from Long Island Heath asked no questions, thought no thoughts, but obeyed his orders to the letter with a precision that resulted in having all the available boats and watercraft at the Brooklyn ferry at the time directed. Through Major-General Putnam, who was in command on Long Island, the orders were issued that kept the American troops from knowing that a retreat was to be made,² for it would have been a fatal admission for Washington to have issued them. The troops were not aware that the Commander-in-Chief had remained upon Long Island, just as they were unaware that they were being withdrawn, until they reached the East River and even then, because of Putnam's orders, each regiment thought it was the only one being moved.

A morning fog, heavy and blanketing, protected the last regiments to leave and the last boatloads had landed on the New York shore before the enemy were aware of what had been done. Had it not been for Major Benjamin Tallmadge's horse, the British would have seen nothing of the retreat except one or two abandoned heavy cannon, mired hub deep and some disconsolate cattle; but Tallmadge, on reaching the New York shore and finding the fog still as thick as ever, determined to go back and attempt the rescue of his horse, which he had been obliged to leave for want of a boat. Calling for volunteers he rowed back to Brooklyn, secured his horse and was pushing off again for New York, when the fog thinned and the British were able to fire a few shots at what they thought was the last boatload of retreating Yankees³ and in this mistaken idea they have been followed by a number of historians.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

HOWE'S PEACE MESSAGE—LOSS OF NEW YORK

THERE was an unexpected result of the battle of Long Island in the capture of Major-General John Sullivan. Lord Howe, feeling that the defeat must have dispirited the Americans, addressed himself with his acknowledged personal charm, to winning the confidence of Sullivan; as a first step to which he informed that gentleman of his willingness to agree to his exchange for General Prescott and that of Lord Stirling for any British brigadier in the possession of the Americans. Howe's next move was to persuade Sullivan, though that general seems to have needed very little persuasion, to be the bearer of a message to Congress with pleasant but vague assurances of Howe's powers and wishes to bring about a reconciliation between the States and Great Britain. Washington, through whom the message passed, expressed himself as believing that it could do no harm to follow the matter up, and the result was a tribute to his foresight, which had discounted the peace move as worthless in every way except that of making plain to America that the British were not to be trusted in such maneuvers. Sullivan's message embarrassed Congress, for that body was already convinced that Howe's powers were not competent to negotiate an acceptable peace. John Adams referred to Sullivan as a decoy duck and expressed regret that the first shot fired by the British on Long Island had not gone through his head. Sullivan's message was verbally enthusiastic but when, by direction of Congress, he reduced Howe's statements to writing, his language was more cautious. However, having listened to the message, Congress appointed a committee of three, of which Benjamin Franklin was one, to meet Howe at Amboy and hear what he had to say. The conference was a failure, as Howe could not show that he possessed powers from Parliament sufficient to meet the requirements of Congress.

Howe's idea that America was discouraged by the defeat on Long Island was only partly correct. The worst effect he did not know, or know-

ing did not believe, and that was the demoralized state of Washington's army. In addition a spirit of plundering by both officers and privates began to prevail, against which Washington issued a sharp order, ending with what Varick would undoubtedly have called a "pathetic plea." "For let it ever be remembered," Washington wrote, "that no plundering Army was ever a successful one." The troops began to show uneasiness over their pay, and, without a dollar in the military chest, Washington was forced to write a pleading letter to Congress¹ that a supply of cash might be forwarded to him at once.

"On every side there is a Choice of difficulties," he wrote to Congress on September eighth, "and every Measure on our part (however painful the reflection is from experience) to be formed with some Apprehension that all our Troops will not do their duty." And if there is anything other than this that can so completely stultify a general, it is not known. Another of Washington's prime difficulties, which is usually forgotten, was the necessity of educating or reasoning Congress into an understanding of why he was following a certain line of conduct, and there are few more nerve-racking strains to be endured than having to convince a public assembly of the wisdom of a procedure about which that assembly is densely ignorant. In Washington's case, Congress was not only ignorant, but contained a group of men who were nearly ready, in 1776, to declare open hostility to his every measure. Viewed from this angle, Washington's next words are illuminating as to his problems:

In deliberating [in council of war] on this Question [the defense of New York] it was impossible to forget that History, our own experience, the advice of our ablest Friends in Europe, the fears of the enemy, and even the Declarations of Congress demonstrate, that on our Side the War should be defensive. It has even been called a War of Posts. That we should on all Occasions avoid a general Action, or put anything to the Risque, unless compelled by a necessity, into which we ought never to be drawn. The Arguments on which such a System was founded were deemed unanswerable and experience has given her sanction. With these views, and being fully persuaded that it would be presumptuous to draw out our Young Troops into open ground, against their Superiors both in number and Discipline; I have never spared the Spade and Pick Ax; I confess I have not found

that readiness to defend even strong Posts, at all hazards, which is necessary to derive the greatest benefit from them. The honor of making a brave defense does not seem to be a sufficient stimulus, when the success is very doubtful, and the falling into the Enemy's hands probable. But I doubt not this will be gradually attained.

September third, a week after the battle of Long Island, Washington was calling for exact regimental returns and repeating the order, sharply, the next day. The men would not stay in their encampments, but were rambling over the city, in such wise that it was impossible for them to get to their posts on an alarm.

On September fourth, a forty-gun British frigate sailed up the East River to Turtle Bay, disdaining the cannon fire directed against her from the New York shore and, although she was forced from her anchorage to a different position, the incident marked the time when it was necessary to prepare to evacuate New York City. All the stores and baggage were ordered to Kingsbridge and orders were given to commence removing the sick northward. General Heath was requested to send over scouting parties to Long Island at night, to annoy the enemy as much as possible, and "more than probably bring off a prisoner, from whom some valuable intelligence may be obtained." Washington was completely in the dark as to Howe's intentions and it was difficult for him to be prepared to meet the British at any one of a dozen or more landing-places on the East River, Long Island Sound or the Hudson; but from his letter to Congress of September sixth, it is evident that he judged that the move would be somewhere along the East River, above Hell Gate.

A council of war, on September seventh, to consider the situation was divided, but the majority voted to attempt to hold the city for a while longer. This result came from an exaggerated idea of the city's importance, in Congress and among the New Yorkers themselves. The natural objection to a heavy property loss which would ensue were the city destroyed, placed too great a strain upon the immature and green patriotism of the inhabitants and the large Tory element exercised an influence in the matter. John Jay was one of the few New York men who was willing to see the city destroyed rather than allow it to become a winter quarters for the British Army, and Major-General Greene was strong for an immediate evacuation and destruction. But the council's opinion prevailed for four days, when the situation so developed that seven members of the

council signed a petition to Washington to reconsider the decision of the seventh. As the Commander-in-Chief had never been whole-heartedly convinced of the advisability of a desperate defense of the town, a new council was called for September twelfth, at General Mifflin's quarters. Then the vote was ten to three to evacuate the town, from the conviction "that it was extremely perilous to remain there longer and that it was absolutely necessary to remove the army at once." Major-General Alexander McDougall, a New York officer, wrote about this council that no one was opposed to retreating from the city "but a *fool*, a *knave* and an *obstinate, honest man*." The three dissenters named in order were Joseph Spencer, George Clinton and William Heath.

Washington's strength at this time amounted, with the militia, to about fourteen thousand, and ninety-six hundred of these were ordered immediately to Kingsbridge, leaving about five thousand to defend Manhattan Island. Of the ninety-six hundred ordered to Kingsbridge, the number of officers reached the astounding figure of twenty-five hundred, or one officer for every four privates and though many of these officers, especially the lieutenants and ensigns, were supposed to carry fuzees and use them, the overproportion was depressing evidence of the skeleton strength of many of the regiments. The retreat from New York lacks the dramatic element of that from Long Island, but it contained a much greater number of near-tragedies for the American cause. General Putnam, who commanded the five thousand men in the city proper, exerted himself to the utmost to get them to the safety of Harlem Heights and barely succeeded. It was this force that was saved by Mrs. Murray's tea-party and that charming and entertaining lady deserves full credit for her wit and social wiles in holding Lord Howe and his staff in her pleasant garden for the length of time she did; for though the troops with Washington were well in advance of the British columns, the loss of Putnam's detachment would have been a most serious blow to the Continental Army. The British landed at Kip's Bay above Hell Gate, on the east side of Manhattan, September fifteenth, at the same time that three of their war-ships sailed up the Hudson as high as Bloomingdale, to make a diversion. Under a heavy fire from the war-ships in the East River the Kip's Bay landing was easily effected; indeed it does not seem possible that the American forces could have prevented it, had the whole army been concentrated at that point. Washington rode rapidly to the bay on hearing the cannonade and arrived

in time to see his troops in full retreat without having made any resistance. Parsons's and Fellows's brigades, amounting to about twenty-three hundred men, had been assigned the duty of supporting the troops in the fortifications guarding this landing-place, and Washington had the extreme mortification of seeing them disperse and flee in all directions before the advance of the first British skirmishers, who numbered less than one hundred.

Despite every effort of Washington and his officers to rally these troops, the panic carried them beyond all control, as well as the range of British shot, and they fled through McGowan's pass to the safety of the Harlem hills. According to some of the accounts the fire of the British naval guns which covered the landing at Kip's Bay would have been a sufficiently terrifying experience for veteran troops to withstand, so that although the panic was regrettable, it was likewise somewhat pardonable. The troops retreating from the fortifications communicated their terror to those who were moving down to their support, and once the panic took full possession, nothing could avail to stop their flight. It was one of the results of that loosening of discipline for which Washington blamed the militia.

About this retreat from Kip's Bay has grown up the legend that Washington recklessly exposed himself to the British fire, in his efforts to rally the troops and in a burst of rage at their cowardice. The basis of the story is the Reverend William Gordon's *History of the American War* and Gordon is not entirely dependable, owing to his change of heart and politics before he wrote his history. This would account for an attempt to present Washington to the English reading public in the light of a reckless, hot-tempered man. Curiously, too, in those hectic days on Manhattan Island, is found what appears to be the only known basis for that oft quoted but never identified order, stated to have been issued before the battle of Trenton: "Put none but Americans on guard tonight." On September fifteenth, three and a half months before Trenton, a general order was issued in New York:

It is so critical a period . . . that the General hopes every officer and Soldier will now exert himself to the utmost. . . . We have found the bad consequences of a surprise; let the utmost care be used to prevent another—for this purpose, the General directs that none be put out as Sentries at night but pick'd men.

CHAPTER XXXIX

BATTLE OF HARLEM HEIGHTS—THE NEW ARMY—OFFICERS AND DISCIPLINE

Two days after Washington's troops had encamped on Harlem Heights, Howe pushed forward a reconnoitering party to feel out the position. This was met by a small detachment ordered out by Washington and a smart skirmish resulted, in which both sides were reenforced until there seemed a likelihood of bringing on a general engagement. This was far from Washington's wish and the American forces were recalled. This minor engagement, which has been called the battle of Harlem Heights (the American loss was less than fifty all told, while the British seem to have lost double that number) was of inestimable value to the morale of the Continentals, for they succeeded in pushing back a British grenadier regiment, in pitched battle in an open field, which surprised them fully as much as it did the Red-coats. Washington's orders the next day heartily thanked the troops for their conduct. "The Behaviour of Yesterday was such a Contrast, to that of the same Troops the day before, as must shew what may be done, where Officers and Soldiers will exert themselves." Then Washington again reverted to his accustomed method of attempting to inspire the troops: "Once more therefore, the General calls upon officers and men, to act up to the noble cause in which they are engaged, and to support the Honor and Liberties of their Country." The continuous effort to imbue the troops with the enthusiasm of honor is unconscious evidence of the value George Washington placed upon that attribute. But the General Orders also picture the still untrained condition of the American Army and justify in every way Washington's lack of confidence in his troops. "The Loss of the Enemy yesterday, would undoubtedly have been greater, if the Orders of the Commander in Chief, had not in some instances been contradicted by inferior officers who, however well they may mean, ought not to presume to direct. It is therefore ordered, that no officer, commanding a party, having received orders from the Commander

in Chief, depart from them without Counter Orders from the same Authority."

The greatest loss sustained by the Americans was in the deaths of Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Knowlton of the Twentieth Continental Infantry and Major Andrew Leitch of the Third Virginia Regiment, two brave and intrepid officers, to whose conduct Washington paid tribute in General Orders and in his report of the affair to Congress.¹ This engagement had another result, the most important of all. It informed Howe that the fighting spirit of the American troops had returned and that if he attempted to storm the fortifications on the crest of the Harlem hills, he would be met by the spirit of Bunker Hill and not that over which he had triumphed at Kip's Bay. The British did not move forward again for a month.

This time was occupied by Washington in strengthening his position and, at the same time, arranging for a safe retreat, for it was evident from the state of his army, that the most he could hope from it was a check of the enemy and perhaps a rear-guard action should the British commander attack with his whole force. The enlistment terms of most of the troops would expire with December and a new army had to be raised, brought into the field, equipped and trained in the three short months that intervened before the old regiments would disintegrate.

As the period will soon arrive, when the Troops composing the present Army (a few excepted) will be disbanded according to the tenor of their Enlistments and the most fatal consequences may ensue if a suitable and timely Provision is not made in this Instance, I take the Liberty of suggesting to Congress not only the expediency, but the absolute necessity there is, that their earliest attention should be had to this Subject. . . . It is a melancholy and painful consideration to those who are concerned in the Work and have the command, to be forming Armies constantly, and to be left by Troops just when they begin to deserve the Name, or perhaps at a Moment when an important blow is expected.²

He painted a new picture for the army itself, in his orders of September twenty-first, when he reminded all the officers

of the indispensable necessity there is of each of them exerting himself in the Department he acts, and that where this is the case of the advantages resulting from it, as an Army, let it be ever so large, then moves like *Clock-work*; whereas, without it, it is no better than an ungovernable Machine, that serves only to perplex and distract those who attempt to conduct it.

The militia theory of Congress would, Washington thought, prove the ruin of the cause. "Being subject to no controul themselves they introduce disorder among the Troops you have attempted to discipline while the change in their living brings on sickness; this makes them Impatient to get home, which spreads universally, and introduces abominable Desertions." "In short," Washington wrote to his brother, John Augustine, "it is not in the power of Words to describe the task I have to act. £50,000 would not induce me again to undergo what I have done." It must be remembered that Washington was serving without pay.

To Governor Patrick Henry, on October fifth, Washington expressed himself more plainly on the subject of militia. The success gained by the troops in the skirmish at Harlem Heights, he said, could not be followed up as a want of confidence in the troops

prevented me from availing myself of that, and almost every other opportunity, which has presented itself. I own my fears, that this must ever be the case, when our dependence is placed on Men, inlisted for a few Months, commanded by such Officers as Party, or Accident, may have furnished; and on Militia, who as soon as they are fairly fixed in the Camp are impatient to return to their own Homes; and who, from an utter disregard of all discipline and restraint among themselves, are but too apt to infuse the like spirit into others. The Evils of short inlistments and employing Militia to oppose against regular and well appointed Troops, I strongly urged to Congress, before the last Army was engaged. Indeed, my own Situation at Cambridge, about the Close of the last Campaign, furnished the most striking example of the fatal tendency of such Measures. I then clearly foresaw, that such an Armament, as we had good reason to expect would be sent against us, could be opposed only by Troops inlisted during the War, and where every Action would add to their experience and improvement, and of whom (if

they were unsuccessful in the beginning), a reasonable hope might be entertained, that, in time, they would become as well acquainted with their Business as their Enemy's.

Virginia's quota of the eighty-eight battalions was fifteen and Washington spoke plainly to Henry on the subject of the officers to be appointed to command them. How much of this plain speaking was due to the difference in character between the two men must be left to others to determine; it is desirable to emphasize here that George Washington's thought and feeling in the matter was to obtain the best men for the struggle in which he was engaged.

I do not expect, that there are Many experienced Gentlemen now left with you, as, from what I have understood, those who have served in the last War are chiefly promoted; however, I am satisfied, that the Military Spirit runs so high in your Colony, and that the Number of Applicants will be so considerable, that a very proper choice may be made. . . . One Circumstance, in this important Business, ought to be cautiously guarded against, and that is, the Soldier and Officer being too nearly on a level. Discipline and Subordination add life and Vigour to Military movements. The person Commanded yields but a reluctant obedience to those, he conceives, are undeservedly made his superiors. The degrees of Rank are frequently transferred from Civil life into the Departments of the Army. The true Criterion to judge by (when past Services do not enter into the Competition) is, to consider whether the Candidate for Office has a just pretention to the Character of a Gentleman, a proper sense of Honor, and some reputation to loose.

But before criticism is hurled at Washington for making class distinctions in such a matter, it would be well to read the concluding paragraph of this letter:

Perhaps, Sir, you may be surprised at my pressing this advice so strongly, as I have done in this Letter; but I have felt the inconveniences resulting from a Contrary principle in so sensible a Manner, and this Army has been so greatly enfeebled by a different line of Conduct, that, I hope, you will readily excuse me.

John Adams, who as a member of the committee appointed by Congress to visit Lord Howe, noticed on his journey to the place of meeting, the straggling, loitering soldiers along the road and on his return to Philadelphia succeeded in carrying through a resolution of Congress directing the Commander-in-Chief to give positive orders to the officers to call the troops together every day and to train them in arms, etc., a thing that Washington had been attempting to do for months prior to this quite officious resolution. The difficulties in enforcing discipline in the kind of army with which Congress furnished Washington have already been noted in part, and such action by Congress was hurtful to him, without helping the army in any way. On September twenty-fourth, Washington wrote to Congress a letter that should have taught that body many things it did not know, but it is doubtful if it penetrated to any intelligent depth:

From the hours allotted to Sleep, I will borrow a few Moments to convey my thoughts on sundry important matters to Congress, I shall offer them, with that sincerity which ought to characterize a man of candour; and with the freedom which may be used in giving useful information, without incurring the imputation of presumption.

The army, Washington pointed out, was again on the eve of its yearly dissolution, with no better prospects of replacement than there had been in 1775. Congress must act at once and act effectually, or liberty was doomed. Parsimonious economy kept the Continental bounty at a figure below that which had been set by the states for three-months men and it was plain that no men would enlist for three years when they could get a much higher bounty for three-months service. Inferentially, Congress was depending upon patriotism to fill the ranks when that influence was non-existent in the Congress itself. The soldier could not see why he should make all the sacrifice while his friends and neighbors reaped the benefits. When the war began, men could have been obtained easily. Now it was too late. The pay of the officers was so low that they could not support their families and militia were worthless in every way besides contaminating the regularly enlisted troops by their laxness of discipline.³

This letter, though dated September twenty-fourth, was written after midnight of that date. At that time Washington was unaware that Con-

gress had appointed a committee of three to go to headquarters to inquire into the state of the army and, of course, recommend action to Congress. His letter of October fourth further amplified conditions.

I have no doubt but that the Comee. will make such report of the State and Condition of the Army, as will induce Congress to believe, that nothing but the most vigorous exertions can put matters upon such a footing as to give this Continent a fair prospect of Success. Give me leave to say, Sir; I say it with due deference and respect, (and my knowledge of the Facts, added to the importance of the Cause and the stake I hold in it, must justify the freedom) that your Affairs are in a more unpromising way than you seem to apprehend.

Your Army, as mentioned in my last, is upon the eve of its political dissolution.

In view of what has been mentioned of Washington's dry and sometimes satirical humor, the phrase "political dissolution" is worth noting. And what immediately follows quite confirms this idea:

True it is, you have voted a larger one in lieu of it, but the Season is late, and there is a material difference between the voting of Battalions and raising of Men. In the latter, there are more difficulties than Congress are aware of; which makes it my duty (as I have been informed of the prevailing Sentiment of this Army) to inform them, that unless the pay of the Officers (especially that of the Field Officers) is raised, the Chief part of those that are worth retaining, will leave the service at the expiration of the present term; as the Soldiers will also, if some greater Incouragement is not offered them than Twenty Dollars, and one hundred Acres of Land.

Land and a suit of clothes, annually, in addition to the pay and bounty were needed, Washington thought, for it was reported that the British were paying ten pounds to each recruit and were enlisting men rapidly. He urged an increase in the pay of the Continental officers, which was another of his distasteful recommendations to the parsimonious Congress and he then faced that body with a plain and unpalatable truth:

The critical Situation of our Affairs at this time will justify my saying, that no time is to be lost in making of fruitless experiments; an unavailing tryal of a Month to get an Army upon the terms pro-

posed, may render it impracticable to do it at all; and prove fatal to our cause; as I am not sure whether any rubs in the way of our Inlistments, or unfavourable turn in our Affairs, may not prove the Means of the Enemy Recruiting Men faster than we do; to this may be added the inextricable difficulty of forming one Corps out of another, and arranging matters with any degree of Order in the face of an Enemy, who are watching for advantages.

Congress had ordered the raising of eighty-eight battalions and, following its usual method of solving a difficult problem, left to the individual states the appointment of officers for these regiments. Washington pointed out quite plainly that this plan would be productive of delay and a confusion impossible to settle. The moment an officer found out that he was to depend on his state for his commission he left camp for his state's capital to make personal application and many officers had to travel two or three hundred miles. In Cambridge in 1775, such officers, for the same reason, left without leave or license from Washington, and "what kind of officers these are, I leave Congress to judge." If an officer was asked to remain in the new army, he stated that he did not know whether he could or not. The appointments were made far removed from the army, where political pressure of all kinds could easily be brought to bear, to the suppression of his name and he be unaware of it until the matter was fixed. If he were an officer of merit he would expect, as a matter of justice, that with an increase in the number of his state's troops, that he should be promoted, after two years' service in the field and further that no man who had less than his experience would be given higher rank.

Upon the present Plan, I plainly foresee an intervention of time between the old and the new Army, which must be filled with Militia (if to be had) with whom no Man, who has any regard for his own reputation can undertake to be answerable for Consequences. I shall also be mistaken in my conjecture, if we do not loose the most valuable Officers in this Army under the present mode of appointing them; consequently, if we have an Army at all, it will be composed of Materials not only entirely raw, but if uncommon pains are not taken, entirely unfit; and I see such a distrust and jealousy of Military power, that the Commander in Chief has not an opportunity, even by recommendation, to give the least assurance of reward for the most essential Services:

Having delivered this blast Washington asked pardon for taking up the time of Congress, "but I should betray that trust which they and my Country have reposed in me were I to be silent upon a matter so extremely interesting." Congress asked the states to send committees to the army to work out the appointments of officers, but it was a clumsy method at best and many of the states delayed. Almost at once a fundamental difficulty presented itself. Washington wrote to Congress, October eighth, asking that the Paymaster-General be immediately furnished with money with which to pay the bounty of twenty dollars granted by Congress to those soldiers who would enlist for the war. "Prompt payment perhaps may have a happy effect and induce the continuance of some who are here, but without it, I am certain that nothing can be done. Nor have we time to lose in making the experiment; but then it may be asked," he wrote with weary patience, "who is to recruit, or who can consider themselves as Officers for that purpose, till the Conventions of the different States have made the Appointments." Doing the best he could, under the circumstances, Washington called upon the line officers to consult among themselves and to furnish him with proper lists and these he referred to such committees of states as had appeared in camp, and to those states that had not sent committees he forwarded the lists by mail either to the governor or the Legislature.

The lack of discipline and the extreme difficulty of enforcing it was sapping the efficiency of the army in more ways than one. The punishment for desertion, the standard thirty-nine lashes on the bare back, had proved completely inadequate as "many harden'd fellows . . . have declared that for a bottle of Rum" they would undergo a second lashing, and as many as thirty or forty soldiers deserted at a time. This was not, however, desertion to the enemy but merely a return to their homes. The plundering habits of both soldiers and officers did much to lessen the patriotism of the civilian population and one officer, who swept up a collection of pier-glasses and women's clothes, threatened to shoot a brigade-major who intercepted him. The court martial convicted him, not of plundering but of insubordination, and Washington, in forwarding the court proceedings to Congress to show the character of some of the officers and the need of carefully selecting new ones, commented dryly on the case that "It is to be observed that the Men who were to share the Plunder became the Evidences for the Prisoner."

CHAPTER XL

LOSS OF FORT WASHINGTON—RETREAT THROUGH THE JERSEYS—CAPTURE OF GENERAL LEE

ON OCTOBER twelfth Lord Howe landed his troops, covered by his brother's fleet, on Throg's Point on the north shore of the East River, nine or ten miles above Harlem Heights. Necessarily Washington's army was the main objective of the operation and, though it appears perfectly plain to us to-day that it would have been wiser and less expensive for Howe to have risked a direct frontal assault on Washington's lines, it should be remembered that the British General could not then have had our clear view of the situation. In war, a flank move that dislodges the enemy from a strong fortified position, is always preferable to a direct assault on that position. The entire New York campaign can be described simply as an operation wherein the British by their superior numbers outflanked Washington's army and defeated detachments of it where Washington's generals were not able to elude the enemy, or mistakenly elected to withstand the assault of the Red-coats. Washington, outnumbered three to one, but following the behest of Congress, exerted all his skill to entice the British to attack his main force on fortified ground of his own choosing and when maneuvered out of that ground by enveloping movements that would have starved him into submission, saved his army and the cause by declining to give battle to superior force in the open.

Howe's move to Throg's Point encouraged the New York loyalists to such an extent that the Legislature exhibited symptoms of panic and Washington was obliged to order some New England troops up into Dutchess County to stiffen the sagging patriot backbones. October seventeenth, marching orders were given to the troops with the commonplace explanation that the movements of the enemy made an alteration in the position of the American forces necessary. Several small skirmishes took place as the American lines were extended to parallel the British flanking march, in one of which Colonel John Glover's Massachusetts regiment

displayed a bravery that gained them notice in the General Orders of October twenty-first. On the twenty-eighth the British dislodged the American troops stationed on Chatterton's Hill. The action was sharp and there was no disposition on the part of the Americans to allow the enemy to take the ground without paying for it. A general attack on the entire front was expected as a result, but again Howe delayed and Washington withdrew to a still stronger position at White Plains, before the British were aware of the movement.

Although Howe decided not to assault this new position of Washington's army, the American troops were far from being in very good condition to withstand a sudden attack. The irregularities which Washington was then reprimanding were serious ones, from the standpoint of discipline and efficiency. The men straggled from camp and roamed about upon plundering expeditions; they stole and concealed horses, they overloaded the camp wagons with unnecessary baggage; drums were beaten at any and all times for no reason and firearms were discharged in and about the camp. The picture of patriot soldiers fighting for the liberty of their country drawn by the General Orders of November first is not a pretty one.

Deciding that the cost of assaulting Washington's new position would be too high and not being able to outflank him again, Howe turned back toward New York City to gather in Fort Washington, while considering a move against Washington from the west, in cooperation with his brother's fleet in the Hudson River. Howe may be fairly criticized for not using his available naval force to the best advantage, but he may be credited with an aversion to pushing matters to what must inevitably have been a bloody annihilation of Washington's army. Such feelings can not be considered as good military ones, however humanitarian they may be; Howe's hesitancy, or delay, was just sufficient to enable Washington to slip out from the successive traps into which Congress, politics and circumstances led him, and a careful reading of his letters will show that the American Commander-in-Chief was aware of these traps, though he considered them largely as unavoidable difficulties.

The holding of Fort Washington was one of the unavoidable difficulties. After British war-ships had sailed up the Hudson, ignoring the *cheveaux-de-frise* and other obstructions, so laboriously placed in the river, and

likewise indifferent to the artillery fire from Forts Washington and Lee on either bank, Washington with his usual common sense, was for evacuating both forts, as the reason for holding them (preventing the British from sailing up the river) no longer existed. His orders to General Greene, November eighth, are clear on this point.

If we cannot prevent Vessels passing up, and the Enemy are possessed of the surrounding Country, what valuable purpose can it answer to attempt to hold a Post from which the expected Benefit cannot be had; I am therefore inclined to think it will not be prudent to hazard the men and Stores at Mount Washington, but as you are on the Spot, leave it to you to give such Orders as to evacuating Mount Washington as you Judge best and so far revoking the Order given Colo. Magaw to defend it to the last.

This left the matter to Greene's discretion, though under the fairest interpretation, evacuation was made the main point and defense secondary. Greene's obsession in favor of defense would not have carried weight with Washington had it not been that Congress, in this, as in the general defense of New York City, had urged it. Then too the military inexperience of the Americans must be taken into consideration as a factor of importance in all such decisions and George Washington was well aware that he himself lacked the necessary experience. Because of this he deferred to the opinions of the generals in whom he had confidence. The result in the Fort Washington case was what could have been expected and Washington's account of it, in his letter to John Augustine, November nineteenth, explains it fully:

This is a most unfortunate affair, and has given me great Mortification as we have lost not only two thousand Men that were there, but a good deal of Artillery, and some of the best Arms we had. And what adds to my Mortification is, that this Post, after the last Ships went past it, was held contrary to my wishes and opinion; as I conceived it to be a dangerous one: but being determind on by a full Council of General Officers, and a resolution of Congress strongly expressive of their desire, that the Channel of the River (which we had been labouring to stop for a long time at this place) might be obstructed, if possible; and knowing that this could not be done un-

less there were Batteries to protect the obstruction I did not care to give an absolute order for withdrawing the Garrison till I could get round and see the Situation of things and then it became too late as the Fort was Invested. I had given it, upon the passing of the last Ships, as my opinion to Genl. Greene, under whose care it was, that it would be best to evacuate the place; but, as the order was discretionary, and his opinion differed from mine, it unhappily was delayed too long, to my great grief, as I think Genl. Howe, considering his Army and ours, would have had but a poor tale to have told without it and would have found it difficult, unless some Southern Expedition may prove successful, to reconcile the People of England to the Conquest of a few pitiful Islands, none of wch. were defensible, considering the great number of their Ships, and the power they have by Sea to surround and render them unapproachable.

Unfortunate as was this affair and mortified as was Washington over the loss, he uttered no word of complaint, nor did he criticize Greene. The responsibility was his and he assumed it without evasion.

When Howe retired toward New York, Washington called a council of war, the unanimous decision of which was that the British commander would, most likely, make an attempt upon the Jerseys before settling down to winter quarters in New York. The American troops raised west of the Hudson were selected to oppose this and were accordingly sent across the river, into New Jersey; those raised in the country east of the Hudson were ordered to remain there and Major-General Charles Lee placed in command, while three thousand men were stationed at Peekskill and the Highland passes to defend the river. But the main difficulty was raising the new army and Washington gave a vivid picture of this in his letter, November sixth-nineteenth, to his brother, John Augustine. Though it is: "impossible for me in the compass of a Letter, to give you any Idea of our Situation, of my difficulties, and the constant perplexities and mortifications I constantly meet with, derived from the unhappy policy of short enlistments, and delaying them too long." The different states were quarreling about the appointment of officers and "nominating such as are not fit to be Shoe Blacks from the local attachments of this or that Member of Assembly. I am wearied almost to death with the retrograde Motions of things."

By the end of November even Congress could see that, for all its resolves, the prospects of raising a new army by the end of the year were discouraging. It began urging the states to speed up their recruiting; blank commissions were sent to Washington with power to fill them in as he thought best and another committee was sent to headquarters to smooth over the grievances of the army as to pay and other matters.

The British made their expected move into Jersey on November 18, 1776. Earl Cornwallis with a detachment of five thousand men, made a sudden and secret crossing of the Hudson and a rapid march on Fort Lee. Some supplies and stores had been removed from the fort, but the speed of the British movement left Greene barely time to withdraw his garrison. Howe reported home that the Americans were so nearly surprised that their camp kettles were found with the men's dinners cooking in them. All the stores, tents, baggage, flour and artillery in the fort, a quantity that could ill be spared, fell into the hands of the enemy. It was a severe loss from the standpoint of supplies, but it was, also, an unrecognized blessing as it set Washington free from the last of the fixed fortifications that had so heavily handicapped the army in the politically ordered defense of New York City. After the fall of Fort Lee, the Continental Army became a free maneuvering force, and was never again hampered by responsibility to any fortified point.¹

The loss of Fort Lee forced Washington to retreat west of Hackensack River, where he again took up his tiresome task of recommending to Congress the things absolutely necessary for the new army for 1777. One important need was that of a field artillery train which "cannot be obtained too soon."

Experience has convinced me, as it has every Gentl. of discernment in this Army, that while we remain so much inferior to the Enemy in this instance, we must carry on the War under infinite disadvantages, and without the smallest probability of success. It has been peculiarly owing to the situation of the Country where their operations have been conducted and to the rough and strong grounds we possessed ourselves of, that they have not carried their Arms by means of their Artillery to a much greater extent. When these difficulties cease, by changing the scene of action to level Campaign Country, the worst of consequences are justly to be apprehended.²

Here was foresight of the coming operations on the level plains of the Jerseys. Congress resolved that field artillery such as Washington recommended should be procured but, as it had to be obtained from Europe, it did not arrive until four months later and what came then were the guns shipped by Beaumarchais, entirely independent of, and not connected in any way with, the efforts of Congress to obtain them.

The British, after capturing Fort Lee, moved to hem in Washington between the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers, but the Commander-in-Chief fathomed their purpose and, moving more swiftly than had his subordinates at Forts Washington and Lee, fell back to Newark. Washington's total force did not equal that of Cornwallis's advancing detachment and in an open level country, precisely the kind to which the British Army was accustomed, and with greatly inferior artillery, there was no possible chance to offer resistance. From Newark he wrote to Congress that he had not yet heard of any measures being taken to supply the place of the Flying Camp. The term of enlistment of these men would end with the year 1776 and, now that the time had arrived when the precise services for which the Camp had been organized were urgently needed, the troops had been scattered, shattered and wasted in the futile defense of New York City. The situation was desperate and General Mifflin was sent post-haste to Congress to explain verbally to that body what Washington hesitated to commit to paper. Colonel Joseph Reed was sent to the Governor of New Jersey to urge that patriot to rouse the state's aid in every possible way. The total force under Washington was less than fifty-five hundred with every prospect of this decreasing daily and little or no prospect of its increasing for some time to come. On November twenty-first the first of many letters was written to General Charles Lee, urging him to join the main army with his force and Lee began to write those evasive and procrastinating answers which unfolded the megalomania that reached its climax upon the field of Monmouth seven months later. The British were pushing forward against Newark with an advance-guard that outnumbered Washington three to one and on November twenty-eighth, the Continentals withdrew from the town as the British entered it. The so-called "retreat through the Jerseys" began. This march of the two armies across Jersey has been misapprehended. Both Howe and Cornwallis have been criticized severely for not pushing forward energetically and scattering

Washington's small force, and some critics have gone so far as to state that Howe really did not wish Washington overtaken or the issue forced. The evidence now available makes the matter clear. The description "retreat through the Jerseys" does not convey an entirely accurate picture of the maneuver. Cornwallis's advance was not a "pursuit" in the strict sense of the term, but a reconnaissance in force. Howe had no purpose or intention, when he ordered the advance against Newark, of marching across the entire state of New Jersey. It was the final move of a campaign which he already considered as closed, and he looked for and expected a strong opposition from Washington at almost any point. When this opposition was not encountered and the Americans fell back from one position after another, Cornwallis, a good soldier, kept pushing forward, for every mile of territory acquired with so much ease, would make so much finer a report to the home government. Both Howe and Cornwallis were more and more surprised as their troops penetrated farther and farther into the rebel country. It was not until they were half-way across the state that the full possibilities of the movement became clear. Even then Howe could not entirely convince himself that Washington was as helpless as he seemed. And just as Howe has been mistakenly criticized, so has Washington's generalship been overlooked. The reasonable, sensible thing for any commander so overwhelmingly outnumbered as was Washington, would have been to put as much distance between himself and the enemy as he could and the fact that Washington retreated so slowly and kept such a short distance ahead of Cornwallis made that experienced soldier careful. The British General was well aware of Washington's ability, though some Americans of a later generation seem not to be. The fact that the two armies were within such short distances of each other all the way across Jersey, without once coming into action, is significant, not only of the character of the "pursuit" but of the state of mind of the British regarding it.

Another point that seems to have been overlooked by Howe's critics is that the British troops were far from fresh (Cornwallis halted five days at New Brunswick to rest his men) when Washington's retreating troops on leaving that town, numbered less than three thousand, and as the advance was progressing far beyond any expected limits, Cornwallis's lines of supplies had to be rearranged to meet the unexpected conditions.

Washington's letter from Brunswick to Governor Livingston of New Jersey, at the beginning of the "retreat" enables us to understand his thought about it. "I will not however despair; but look forward with a hope that such Reinforcements will yet arrive to my assistance, as will enable me to prevent our common Enemy from making much further Progress." Here is the picture of the man of Faith, tenaciously holding to the shreds of a forlorn resistance, compelled by inexorable circumstances to retreat before an overwhelming force, but falling back so slowly that the trained soldiers in command of the pursuit were impelled to caution by the very hardihood of the slow movement.

The hoped for, longed for and desperately needed reenforcements did not come. The militia seemed deaf and blind to the emergency and the only force upon which Washington could rely was the three thousand men left at North Castle, on the east side of the Hudson River, under the command of Major-General Charles Lee. These troops were denied him through Lee's egocentric ambition, which had been fostered and strengthened by the inane and almost criminal flattery of Colonel Joseph Reed, Washington's Adjutant-General. One of the great handicaps under which the Continental Army fought was a subconscious feeling of the superior prowess of the British military machine and especially did this feeling prevail in respect to those men who had once been officers in the British Army. Major-General Charles Lee was an outstanding example of this. If Lee, a retired major on half-pay, had been given the rank of a lieutenant-colonel, just one degree above his British Army rank, he might have contributed services of some value to the American cause but Congress, under the spell and glamour of the British Army tradition, advanced him to the rank of a major-general, a commission he neither deserved nor was competent to use skilfully. Possessed of a superficial and showy intellect, with a smattering of the classics which he never neglected to display; with a certain originality of mind and natural wit, a gift for satire and pungency of expression both engaging and unusual, Lee was one of those interesting personalities who seemed more able than he really was. The Indians called him "Boiling Water," which was a complete and accurate characterization. To this man, left in a separate command in Westchester County, by Washington, the Adjutant-General, Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania, wrote, urging his presence with the main

army for the reason that Lee had decision of mind which, Reed as good as said, Washington lacked. Reed's asininity went to the length of asserting that credit for the retreat from Manhattan, from Kingsbridge and White Plains belonged to Lee and that had he been with the army, the garrison of Fort Washington would have been saved.³ He even wrote that the British are "less confident when you are present," implying that the enemy held Washington as less formidable. Lee's answer to this was what might have been expected. He lamented with Reed "that fatal indecision of mind in war is a much greater disqualification than stupidity"; spoke largely of an inane plan he had formed to attack Major Robert Roger's corps and assured Reed that as soon as that was carried out, he would fly to the main army "for to confess a truth, I really think our chief will do better with me than without me." Reed's letter appears to have confirmed Lee in his plan to hold back from marching his troops to Washington's aid, which plan he persistently acted upon until his capture by the British eliminated him from the campaign. It is difficult to explain Reed's letter as anything other than the act of a far from firm patriot. It was certainly disloyalty to his commander-in-chief and a disloyalty of the most contemptible kind. It shows plainly that Reed had lost faith in Washington and it also shows that he was a poor judge of men in preferring a charlatan braggart to a man of George Washington's character. Lee's answer to Reed came inadvertently under Washington's eye and the only notice he took of it was to forward it to Reed with an apology for having opened and read it, in the press of headquarters business, before he realized that it was a private letter. It took Reed four months to frame an explanation to Washington that he felt could pass muster and the attempt is a further revelation of Reed's character. Washington's attitude in this affair appears as one of unusual forbearance, until we measure it by the rule he himself applied to this and to every other difficulty of war, and that was to be completely indifferent to everything personal that might harm the cause. Joseph Reed might possibly have harmed the cause, for Joseph Reed was already a political power in Pennsylvania (he later became president of the state) and to alienate Reed would not have made for smoothness in Pennsylvania cooperation. The politics of that state were complicated and Washington felt that nothing was to be gained by allowing personal feeling to interfere with

national projects. There too was George Washington's unusual ability to judge men and it seems quite likely that he knew Reed better than Reed knew himself (certainly better than Reed knew George Washington).

But the principle factor at this time was General Lee. Encouraged by Reed's letter and by the undeserved adulation he had received from all sides since he first joined the American Army, Lee took council with his overwhelming conceit and ambition and decided not to obey Washington's orders, but to interpose delays and continue to operate in his separate command, until the British either scattered Washington's small force or the army dwindled to nothing, in which case Lee and his troops would be the largest American force left and the question of command could then be taken up with a chance of Lee's becoming commander-in-chief. It was the idea of a small soul and was defeated by the conceit of the man who possessed it. At the siege of Boston, Washington had criticized Lee for a habit of fixing his quarters too far from his troops and now Lee indulged in the same slovenly practise. A Tory carried word to the British and a small detachment of dragoons swooped down upon the house and swept Lee off, a prisoner. It was looked upon as great misfortune at the time and the British exulted over their success when, as a matter of fact, the Tory informer should have been pensioned by the Congress as public benefactor, and, instead of struggling mightily to protect Lee, when the British threatened to hang him as a deserter from their army, the Congress should have sent Howe a good strong rope, by flag of truce, the moment this threat became known. But, of course, the real truth about Lee did not come to light for many years thereafter.

General Sullivan, on whom the command of Lee's troops devolved, immediately marched them by the nearest and safest route to Washington's army and their value was demonstrated a few weeks later in the battle of Trenton.

Washington's tired and disheartened troops reached Trenton on the Delaware, December third, and rested there several days. On the fifth his letter to Congress reveals again the unbeaten spirit of the American Commander-in-Chief:

As nothing but necessity obliged me to retire before the Enemy and leave so much of the Jerseys unprotected, I conceive it to be my

duty, and it Corrisponds with my Inclination, to make head against them, so soon as there shall be the least possibility of doing it.

He had left about twelve hundred men at Princeton to retard the British until the baggage of the army could be got across the Delaware and after that was nearly accomplished, he intended

to face about with such Troops as were fit for service and March back to Princeton. . . . At any rate the Enemy's progress may be retarded by this Means if they intend to come on, and the People's fears in some measure quieted if they do not.

The failure of the militia to turn out to his support was a main reason why no opposition could be made to the advance of the British into Jersey. This and ten thousand other instances

might be adduced to shew the disadvantages of short Enlistments, and the little dependence upon Militia in times of real danger; but as yesterday cannot be recalled, I will not dwell upon a subject which no doubt has given uneasiness to Congress, as well as severe pain and mortification to me. . . . I am clearly of opinion, that if 40,000 Men had been kept in constant pay since the first Commencement of Hostilities, and the Militia had been excused doing duty during that Period, the Continent would have saved Money. When I reflect the losses we have sustain'd for want of good Troops, the certainty of this is placed beyond a doubt in my Mind.

On December seventh, Washington wrote to General Heath, then at Peekskill, a letter that has been ignored by those who seek to explain the Trenton-Princeton battles, but which can not properly be passed over, for he ordered Heath to cross the Hudson with his troops and move toward Morristown, New Jersey "so as to give all possible Protection to the Country and vigour to the Cause. . . . *a Junction may be made if necessary* and at all Events such a Movement would attract Attention." The italics are not in the original letter, but are inserted to emphasize the fact that as early as December seventh, George Washington had in mind a movement, the hint of which is already to be found in his letter to Congress of December fifth, in his intended return to Princeton. In his letters

to Heath, Maxwell and McDougall in the week immediately following, Morristown, New Jersey, was selected as the place of rendezvous for reinforcements, new recruits and militia from New York and eastern states.

To Governor Trumbull Washington wrote on December twelfth that he retreated to Trenton "in order to wait for Supplies, hoping that such Numbers [of reinforcements] would come in from Pennsylvania, as would enable me to turn upon the Enemy, and recover most of the Ground which they had gained."

To Gates he wrote, December fourteenth, urging him onward with the troops he was bringing from the north: "If we can draw our forces together, I trust, under the smiles of providence, we may yet effect an important stroke."

The army halted at Trenton from December third to December seventh and on the last date, learning that the British had reached Princeton, Washington swept up all the boats and watercraft and crossed the Delaware into Pennsylvania. His force by then had been augmented by about two thousand Pennsylvania militia, and from the west bank of the river he watched the British make futile marches up and down searching for means to cross. His task was to guard fifty miles or more of river with barely five thousand men and prevent the crossing of a disciplined army of three times that number: As he wrote to Lund Washington, December seventeenth:

Hitherto, by our destruction of the boats, and vigilance in watching the fords of the river above the falls (which are now rather high), we have prevented them from crossing; but how long we shall be able to do it God only knows, as they are still hovering about the river. . . . The unhappy policy of short enlistments and a dependence upon militia will, I fear, prove the downfall of our cause.

As the British neared Philadelphia, Congress displayed an increasing nervousness and passed many resolutions indicative of that tension. By one it presumed to direct Washington in military matters, in another it decreed a day of fasting and prayer and enjoined upon all civil and military officers a strict adherence to the regulations and particularly forbade profane swearing and all immorality. Finally, on December twelfth, Congress resolved that despite rumors to that effect, it would not

leave Philadelphia and called upon Washington to contradict the report. Washington declined to publish this resolve and advised that as the matter of staying in or leaving Philadelphia was not dependent upon a resolve, it should be disregarded. This, after Congress had retreated to the safe distance of Baltimore, was approved by that body as a judicious act upon Washington's part.

The small American force was posted by Washington as wisely as possible along the west bank of the Delaware, covering the various ferries and with such supporting arrangements as were most practicable. No one knew better than the Commander-in-Chief the well-nigh hopeless condition of affairs. If recruits for the new army did not arrive in great numbers before January first, his small army, daily dwindling from sickness, would cease to exist, thanks to the obsession of Congress on the one-year enlistment term. If the Delaware froze before that time so that the British could cross, the chances were also decidedly good that the American Army would then cease to exist before January first. As he had written to Lund Washington: "Our only dependence now is upon the speedy enlistment of a new army. If this fails I think the game will be pretty well up."

A deplorable difficulty lay in the fact that the regions of both Pennsylvania and New Jersey through which and to which the Continental Army had marched were largely loyalist. Washington could obtain no information and little assistance, not a man would turn out to reenforce the army and numbers of the Jerseymen took the oath of allegiance to the King. Yet Washington's faith in the ultimate triumph of liberty enabled him to write to his brother John Augustine: "No Man, I believe ever had a greater choice of difficulties and less means to extricate himself from them. However under a full persuasion of the justice of our Cause, I cannot entertain an Idea that it will finally sink tho' it may remain for some time under a Cloud."

On December 20, 1776, Washington drafted a long letter to Congress which is a remarkable analysis of the situation, and should be read in its entirety for the vivid picture it paints of conditions. Even George Washington's patience with Congress showed signs of weakening under the heavy strain put upon it by that body. He began by calling attention to the fact that he had waited since October to learn the decision of Congress on

raising corps of artillery and engineers, but having heard nothing and the need being great, he had taken upon himself to order three battalions of artillery to be immediately recruited.

Ten days more will put an end to the existence of our Army . . . if therefore in the short Interval we have to provide, and make these great and arduous preparations, every matter that in its nature is self evident, is to be refer'd to Congress, at a distance of 130 or 140 Miles, so much time must necessarily elapse, as to defeat the end in view. It may be said that this is an application for powers that are too dangerous to be Intrusted, I can only add, that desparate diseases require desparate Remedies; and with truth declare, that I have no lust after power but wish with as much fervency as any man upon this wide and extended Continent, for an opportunity of turning the Sword into a plow share. But my feelings as an Officer and a Man, have been such as to force me to say that no person ever had a greater choice of difficulties to contend with than I have; it is needless to add that short Inlistments, and a mistaken dependance upon Militia, have been the Origin of all our Misfortunes and the great accumulation of our Debt. [Militia, Washington wrote] come in you cannot tell how, go, you cannot tell when; and act, you cannot tell where; Consume your Provisions, exhaust your Stores, and leave you at last in a critical moment. These Sir are the Men I am to depend upon Ten days hence,—this is the basis on which your Cause will and must for ever depend, till you get a large Standing Army, sufficient of itself to oppose the Enemy. . . . It may be thought that, I am going a good deal out of the line of my duty to adopt these Measures, or advise thus freely; A Character to loose, an Estate to forfeit, the inestimable Blessing of Liberty at Stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse. [He had, he wrote] labourd ever since I have been in the Service to discourage all kinds of local attachments, and distinctions of Country, denominating the whole by the greater Name of American; but I found it impossible to overcome prejudices.

Much has been written about the grant to Washington of the so-called dictatorial powers by Congress; but that Washington had asked for the grant of some of the powers seems to have been overlooked.

CHAPTER XLI

THE TWO BATTLES OF TRENTON—PRINCETON

ON CHRISTMAS EVE Washington wrote once more to Congress informing that body of the deplorable weakness of the army and how on January 1, 1777, the day on which he should have a new army, enlisted for the war, he would, because no recruits had appeared, be reduced, by expired enlistments, to less than two thousand Continentals and a few Pennsylvania militia. Washington now, at the end of the year 1776, was confronted again with precisely the same situation as that of the end of the year 1775. Now as then, since Congress had failed to give him an army to replace the one that was disintegrating he was driven to use what men he had in a last desperate gamble.

Washington's hatred of war and his sympathy for the suffering of his troops are too well established to admit of question, so it is fair to conclude that a dislike to sacrifice his men helped him to postpone such an attempt until the hope of reenforcements was entirely dead. With opportunity circumscribed by the small force at his command, it was natural that Washington's mind should revert to the old Indian fighting tactics of colonial days, and that he should consider hurling his men in a series of desperate raids against the outposts of the enemy. The nearest of these were at Trenton, Bordentown, Burlington and Mount Holly and, as they were also the nearest to Philadelphia, Washington concentrated upon them. When the plan originated and how it developed seems to be unrecorded, nor is it important, despite the strained and forced attempts to give credit to every one other than Washington.

On Christmas Eve the Commander-in-Chief wrote to Colonel John Cadwalader of Pennsylvania, a trusted friend and energetic officer:

Fix with Colo. Griffin on our Points of Attack. In this as circumstances must govern, I shall not interfere; but let the hour of attack be the 26th, and one hour before day (of that morning). . . . If you

should be successful (of which I have the highest hopes) move forward if possible, so as to form a junction with me, if the like good fortune should attend our Enterprize, either at Trenton or Princeton.

“Form a junction with me either at Trenton or *Princeton*.” One glance at the map will show that there was an underlying idea of a broader scope than an outpost raid; but it did not develop on December 26, 1776, because of the failure of Washington’s two supporting detachments to cross the Delaware.

The attack on Trenton was to be supported by Cadwalader, who was to cross at Bristol with the Pennsylvania militia and join Colonel Samuel Griffin in a surprise attack upon Mount Holly. Brigadier-General James Ewing with his militia was to cross the Delaware at the Trenton lower ferry and block the British retreat from Trenton on the south, while Washington was to cross at McKonkey’s Ferry, above the town, and deliver the main attack from the north. The weak spot in the plan was the cooperation of different bodies of troops which had to cross a difficult river, march unequal distances and deliver surprise attacks at precisely the same time, minus all communication with each other for several hours. This is always a difficult military maneuver under ideal conditions and conditions on Christmas night, 1776, were the worst possible. Above McKonkey’s Ferry on the Pennsylvania side was a flat level meadow-land, perhaps a mile in length, flanked by low hills on the west and concealed from the Jersey shore by a thick fringe of trees. Into this meadow, as the short Christmas day darkened into night, marched the twenty-four hundred men who were all that were left of the Continental regulars. They carried with them all the available artillery and this fact alone testifies to the situation, for if the enemy could not be surprised, a greater amount of artillery could not save the situation. If a surprise was effected, less than the number of pieces carried (stated to be twenty), would have been amply sufficient. General George Washington was cutting loose from his base to fight with the utmost desperation to the bitter end, for he intended that the Continental Army should end its existence on the battle-field and not dissolve for want of recruits.

At six P. M., from McKonkey’s Ferry, Washington sent this message to Cadwalader:

Notwithstanding the discouraging Accounts I have received from Col. Reed of what might be expected from the Operations below, I am determined, as the Night is favourable, to cross the River and make the attack upon Trenton in the Morning. If you can do nothing real, at least create as great a diversion as possible.

The barges and flatboats were manned by Glover's Marblehead regiment, and never did watermen have a harder task than to ferry the army that night through the driving ice in the Delaware. Washington expected to get the whole army over the river by midnight, when he could easily have marched the nine miles to Trenton before dawn, but the ice delayed matters. It was nearly three A.M. before the artillery was over and four o'clock before the troops started on their march. There was no chance now of reaching the town before daylight, but Washington pushed forward. Sullivan, with about half the men, was ordered to march into the town by the lower, or river road, while Washington with the rest took the upper, or Penn Town road. As the distance was about the same in each case, the orders were to attack as soon as the town was reached.

A more difficult march can not be imagined. After the severe labor of embarking the artillery and horses, the chilling cold and icy wet of the river passage, the nine-mile march to Trenton might have proved a blessing in whipping up the blood circulation; but it began to snow and then to sleet and the exhausted, half frozen men could not move faster than two miles an hour.

Washington's detachment reached Trenton exactly at eight A.M. and three minutes after the first shots were exchanged with the Hessian picket guards, Washington heard Sullivan's guns thunder from the lower road. These Hessian pickets maintained a stout resistance in their retreat, firing from the cover of every house they passed; but were pushed back so rapidly that they disorganized the main body, which was attempting to form in the center of the town. Their line broken the Hessians retreated toward the left, only to be met by Sullivan's detachment, which charged and drove them back into the town. They then pushed toward the Princeton road and there were checked by Hand's rifle regiment and the Pennsylvania German battalion. Washington then pushed Stirling's brigade against their left flank. Finding themselves surrounded, the Hessians surrendered. The British light horse, quartered in the town, made good their

escape down the Bordentown road and several hundred Hessians followed their lead before Sullivan had advanced far enough to cut them off. General Ewing's division had been relied upon to cut off this retreat, but Ewing, like Cadwalader, failed to get across the river. As Washington reported to Congress, December twenty-seventh:

I am fully confident, that could the Troops under Genls. Cadwalader and Ewing have passed the River, I should have been able, with their Assistance to have driven the Enemy from all their Posts below Trenton. But the Number I had with me being inferior to theirs below me, and a Strong Battalion of Light Infantry at Princeton above me, I thought it most prudent to return the same Evening with my Prisoners and the Artillery we had taken.

There were nearly a thousand of these prisoners and six pieces of brass artillery. The American loss was only two or three and these seem to have died from cold and exposure. It is doubtful if any Americans were killed in action. The Hessians had but twenty-five or thirty killed and less than a hundred wounded, as the attack was so sudden and overwhelming that little resistance could be made. Colonel Rahl, the Hessian commander, was mortally wounded. Lieutenant-Colonel George Baylor, one of Washington's aides, was sent to Baltimore with the news of the victory at Trenton. He carried with him one of the captured Hessian standards and it does not require much imagination to picture the sensation caused by the appearance, on the floor of Congress, of this upstanding officer with a Hessian flag and the dispatch from the Commander-in-Chief.

In informing Cadwalader of the victory at Trenton, Washington wrote, December twenty-seventh:

If we could happily beat up the rest of their Quarters bordering on and near the River, it would be attended with the most valuable consequence. I have called a meeting of the General Officers to consult of what measures shall be next pursued and would recommend that you and Genl. Putnam should defer your intended Operations till you hear from me, perhaps it may be judged prudent for us to pass here with the force we have if it is practicable or if it is not, that I may come down to you and afford every assistance in my power. We will try to concert a plan and upon such principles as shall appear to promise success.

Cadwalader, not knowing of Washington's victory, made a second attempt, December twenty-sixth, to cross the Delaware, succeeded and was now in Burlington, New Jersey, having marched in that direction on the advice of Adjutant-General Joseph Reed.¹

The effect of the sudden and stunning victory at Trenton seemed out of all proportion to the actual military result; but the maneuver contained all of those factors that appeal strongly to the imagination, and the story lost nothing by repetition. A dispirited and dwindling army which had been retreating before a superior force for weeks had suddenly turned upon its pursuer, crossed a wild river, amid ice and sleet, and out from the snow and darkness had burst upon the best trained soldiers of Europe, beaten them down with artillery fire and bayonet, swept up a thousand prisoners and vanished, leaving such panic and dismay behind it that the Hessian commander at the next British post had hastily fallen back toward New York. This retreat of Count Donop to Princeton, shook the British nearly as much as the defeat at Trenton, for Donop was a trained soldier, not given to panic and if he fell back the situation must be bad. This seems to have been the effect upon Howe, in New York, and there are stories that he damned the Hessians heartily. Cornwallis, who had pushed Washington's small army across Jersey from Hackensack to the Delaware, was on the point of sailing home to England with a report that the rebels were crushed and the rebellion at an end. Howe ordered him back to the front again, and hastily removing his baggage from the ship on which he was to sail, Cornwallis started back across Jersey to retrieve the disaster.

In America the news of Trenton was like the sun breaking through heavy clouds. The patriots had nearly given up hope; everything was gloom and disappointment and the Tories were openly gloating. The British Army, with New York in its possession and a line of posts across the entire state of New Jersey from Amboy to the Delaware River, was on the point of delivering the final blow. Then came the smashing stroke at Trenton which showed that the American soldier could so easily defeat the vaunted Hessians that one thousand of them had been captured and another thousand had retreated before a bayonet charge.

Some much needed reinforcements of militia now began to arrive; five hundred came from Philadelphia, three hundred came from Burlington

and the next day seven or eight hundred more. Cadwalader wrote from Bordentown that his force was about eighteen hundred men² and on December thirtieth Washington was able to report that the New England troops, whose time expired December thirty-first, had agreed to stay six weeks longer when promised a bounty of ten dollars each. Robert Morris succeeded in raising this money in Philadelphia, it is said by a house-to-house solicitation; but this story seems more likely to apply to the one hundred and twenty-seven pounds, seven shillings and six pence in coin which he sent to Washington in response to his urgent call for hard money with which to employ spies.³ After the utmost exertions Washington succeeded in gathering a mixed force of Continentals and militia about five thousand strong and with these he again crossed the Delaware River, December twenty-ninth, to "pursue the Enemy in their Retreat, try to beat up more of their Quarters and . . . in every Instance adopt such Measures as the exigency of our affairs requires and our situation will justify."⁴ From Trenton, the next day, he wrote to the commanding officer at Morristown to endeavor to hold all the time-expired Continental troops there by every means in his power, promising them the same bounty of ten dollars given the New England troops. "Let them know," he wrote, "the Militia are pouring in from all Quarters and only want Veteran Troops to lead them on. Since our Success at this place on the 26th the Enemy have evacuated all the Country below, they went off in the greatest hurry and Confusion. I beg you will collect all the Men you possibly can about Chatham, and after gaining the proper Intelligence, endeavor to strike a stroke upon Elizabethtown or that Neighborhood; at any rate be ready to cooperate with me." Here, especially in the last sentence, is the Morristown idea again.

Morristown began to come into the picture definitely with Washington's letter of December twenty-eighth to Major-General Heath, when he informed that General that he intended to cross into Jersey again as soon as his troops were rested and that he had now succeeded in gathering a respectable force by means of the Pennsylvania militia which had turned out with more spirit since the Trenton victory. "I have wrote," he said, "to Genl. McDougall and Genl. Maxwell who are at Morris Town, and have desired them to collect as large a Body of Militia as they possibly can, and whether the Enemy advance or retreat, harrass them on Flank

and Rear. If they cannot be brought to that to keep them embodied, till they are joined by our regular Troops." He then requested Heath to march down from Peekskill with the Eastern militia as he felt sure that the British would not and could not make any attempt on the Highlands at that season of the year. Morristown, as a post of strategic value to the Continental Army, had already been settled in Washington's thought. Philadelphia, now that Congress had left that city, could be defended best by such a move. An advance into Jersey solely to beat up other British outposts, when his army had been reenforced by only a few hundred militia and was still greatly outnumbered by the British force from which he had so recently retreated, would have been a stupid blunder for Washington to make. Despite the enthusiasm roused by the victory at Trenton and the enemy's loss of one thousand men, Washington knew perfectly well that the only real advantage gained was the territory released by Donop's hasty abandonment of his advance posts. Washington's letter to Congress, of December twenty-ninth, was but a partial disclosure of his purpose. The drafts of his letters show the care with which he struck out the sometimes too detailed information set down by his aides, or his own too full explanations in the first composition. General Washington was learning, by the end of the year 1776, that it was not wise to explain his intentions fully, even to Congress. Reports after an event were different, but it becomes plain, from a careful scrutiny of the drafts of his letters, that in his communications to Congress, only so much of his military plans were disclosed as could not benefit the enemy, in case of any slip. So, though he did not mention it to Congress, General George Washington advanced into New Jersey to strike another blow at a British outpost, if feasible, but with the main purpose of reaching Morristown by a sudden march. He was well convinced that he could not prevent the British from crossing the Delaware the moment the river froze over, any more than he could have done before the dash on Trenton; but by the Trenton victory he had dislocated the chain of British posts and forced their retirement some miles back from the Delaware. His crossing again into Jersey was with the hope also of encouraging the militia to turn out to his support with greater alacrity.

Conditions had now changed and he had greater leeway and more time and country through which to maneuver, before the British could get as

dangerously close to Philadelphia as they had been before. If he could not block the enemy with his small army, he could try the effect of threatening that long line of British supply transportation that stretched from Staten Island to the advance post at Princeton. It was worth trying, for it mattered not how the British were forced to fall back from the Delaware, so long as they fell back.

Congress, fleeing in panic from Philadelphia to Baltimore, almost breathlessly passed a resolution from the latter city, granting Washington all and more than the authority he asked for in his letter of December twentieth. They gave him power to raise, officer and equip the sixteen additional regiments previously authorized, which would bring the permanent army total up to one hundred and four regiments (Washington had advised a total of one hundred and ten); to settle a system of army promotion; to arrange for supplies and to arrest civilians. In fact, the grant of powers was so extensive that Lord George Germain declared in Parliament that they made Washington "the dictator of America." They were granted for a term of six months unless sooner revoked by Congress and they were, in effect, an acknowledgment by Congress, of its incompetence to handle the situation. In acknowledging the trust Washington assured Congress, January 1, 1777, "that all my faculties shall be employed to direct properly the powers they have been pleased to vest me with and to advance those objects, and only those which gave rise to this honorable mark of distinction." To the committee of Congress which remained in Philadelphia, he wrote that "Instead of thinking myself free'd from all *civil* Obligations, by this mark of their Confidence, I shall constantly bear in mind, that as the Sword was the last Resort for the preservation of our Liberties, so it ought to be the first thing laid aside, when those Liberties are firmly established."⁵

Respect for civil authority was a dominant political principle with George Washington and his carefulness in subordinating the military to the civil, wherever it could possibly be done with safety, is the finest example of American democracy that we possess.

Having recovered some of the self-esteem lost in the hasty flight to Baltimore, and recovered also a degree of confidence through Washington's victories at Trenton and Princeton, Congress, on the first unusual exercise by Washington of his dictatorial powers, became agitated and

critical. Washington issued his proclamation of January twenty-fifth, calling upon all the inhabitants, who had subscribed to General Howe's declaration of pardon and received protection papers from the British, to appear before the nearest Continental general officer, give up such protection and take the oath of allegiance to the United States, or remove themselves at once into the British lines.

It does not seem possible that there could be criticism of this common-sense order, yet it was subject to bitter attack in Congress by hair-splitting patriots who were so enamored of the civil rights of the states that they considered this proclamation a dangerous infringement of such rights. The inability of otherwise intelligent men to see that, unless the enemies of their civil rights were suppressed, the rights themselves would vanish, is indicative not only of the difficulties through which the Revolution struggled, but makes plain the muddled thought of the time. Abraham Clark, a delegate to the Continental Congress from New Jersey, whose patriotism is unquestioned, was an outstanding example of this unquestioned sophistry.

It may have been to Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant that Washington wrote his letter of February 14, 1777, in answer to one from Sergeant to him criticizing the proclamation:

It is not [Washington wrote with his diplomatic common sense] within the scan of human wisdom to devise a perfect Plan. In all human Institutions, In the accomplishment of all great events: In the adoption of any measures for general operation, Individuals may, and will suffer; but in the case complain'd of, the matter may, I think, be answered by propounding a few questions.

Is it not a duty Incumbent upon the Members of every State to defend the rights and liberties of that State? If so, is an [Oath ex]torted from them, to observe [a con]trary conduct, obligatory [mutilated]. If such Oath was not [extorted] but the effect of a volunta[ry act] can the person taking of [it be] considered in any other light than as an Enemy to his Country? In either case then, where is the Injustice of calling upon them for a declaration of their Sentiments? Is a Neutral character in one of the United States, which has by her Representatives, solemnly engaged to support the Cause, a justifiable one? If it is, may it not be extended to corporate bodies; to the State at large, and to the inevitable destruction of the

opposition; which under Providence, depends upon a firm union of the whole, and the spirited exertions of all its Constituent parts?

Upon the whole, it appears to me that but two kinds of People will complain much of the Proclamation. namely, those that are really disaffected. and such as want to lay by, and wait the Issue of the dispute. The first class cannot be pleased; the next are endeavouring to play a dble. game, in which their present protections may, eventually, become a sure Card.⁶

This was George Washington's idea of patriotic principle and it is a clean-cut and satisfactory idea.

In the midst of the carping criticism and objections to Washington's actions, it must have been a most refreshing relief to the Commander-in-Chief to receive such sentiments as those written him by his brother-in-law, Bartholomew Dandridge, then a burgess in Virginia:

Your patience and fortitude can have no bounds after sustaining so severe a trial as you have lately had. God grant that you may not meet with such another. Permit me to say (without flattery) that it is plain Providence designed you as the favorite Instrument in working out the Salvation of America, it is you alone that can defend us against our foreign and still more dangerous domestic Enemies. I wish these Considerations would caution you against exposing your Person too much, in all other Things I rely on you most steadfastly, but I am sure you can have no Idea of your real value to us. If you were not at the head of our Affairs we should have ten Tories in Virginia where we have one, a personal attachment to you, weighs more with some than any attachment to the glorious cause in which you are engaged.⁷

Cornwallis was hurrying from New York to assume command of the British advance again, while Washington, in Trenton, was straining every nerve to consolidate and groom his troops for the strenuous time that was coming. Had he been able to get things into the proper shape, he would have launched his attack before Cornwallis reached Princeton, but the British General arrived and ordered his troops forward as Washington began sending out scouting parties to locate the British force. He could get no information from the country people as to the British, for, as he had

written to his brother John Augustine: "We are in a very disaffected part of the Province." Cornwallis with nearly six thousand men sloshed over the miry, muddy road from Princeton and came in contact with Washington's scouts on the morning of January 2, 1777, about half-way between Princeton and Trenton. The heavy roads and the resistance put up by the American skirmishers, reenforced by about six hundred men, held back the British advance and it was not until late in the afternoon that the enemy reached the outskirts of Trenton. Here the action became warmer, but when Cornwallis pushed into the town he found the American troops posted on the south side of the Assunpink Creek with their artillery commanding the only bridge and the fords impossible because of the heavy rains. Some half-hearted attempts to cross seem to have been made in the face of Washington's fire, but darkness was coming on, Cornwallis checked his troops and the affair simmered down to a desultory artillery duel. This was a welcome respite to the British, for they had been marching all day on heavy roads and skirmishing for nearly eight hours with an enemy who made no stand in the open but fought back from every fence and bush-covered rise. Cornwallis has been criticized for not pushing forward, just as Howe has been criticized for his slowness in following Washington across New Jersey; but Cornwallis was a good soldier and he knew more about his troops, who had marched and fought from noon until nightfall, than his literary soldier-critics of later years. His reasons for postponing an assault until the next day were good. The weakness of military criticism, years after an event, is that the critic always assumes that every situation will develop exactly as he reasons, while every military man knows that the one uncertain thing in the world is the action of the enemy in meeting a maneuver.

There are many engaging stories in print about the happenings on this night of January 2, 1777, but all of them are the recollections of interested individuals, set down, in some instances, years afterward. As contributions of fact they are decidedly unreliable.

It is fairly well established that Washington would have moved forward from Trenton could he have completed his arrangements before the advancing troops of Cornwallis blocked a northward movement, and a great deal of pother has arisen over the council of war held in Trenton the night of January second, when the British troops faced Washington's army

across the Assunpink. Much has been written about Washington being caught in a trap, of his calling a council of war to get him out of it and of the many brilliant suggestions, St. Clair's among others, which resulted in the march upon Princeton. The only thing lacking to complete this legendary picture of Washington's helplessness is a story that Colonel Joseph Reed, by an impassioned speech, forced a hesitant and procrastinating commander-in-chief to save his army. It should be remembered that Washington was in the habit of fortifying his important military moves by decisions of councils of war; it should also be remembered that Washington usually opened a council of war by propounding a series of questions for consideration. It has been demonstrated that the main ideas behind the second crossing into New Jersey were another British outpost raid, this time against Brunswick, and afterward a march to Morristown, where new recruits and the militia were assembling. The forward move of Cornwallis made the outpost raid impossible; all that was left was for the council to approve the march upon Morristown and the route to be taken.

All during the night the camp-fires of the American troops were kept blazing. A small body of men attended to this, moving conspicuously about to simulate the presence of a large number; they dug noisily at breastworks and kept up an appearance of great activity. But the army's baggage was sent off; the tires of the artillery and wagons were bound with such rope and cloth as were to be had and the entire army filed off about midnight from the British front, by a back road toward Princeton. His hopes still compassing a successful raid, Washington pushed his troops on for a surprise attack on the British stores at Brunswick; but, as exhausted British troops had held Cornwallis at the Assunpink, so the same thing lost Washington the stores at Brunswick. The march from Trenton to Princeton in freezing weather along a rough and frozen road was as miserable and exhausting a movement as the march from McKonkey's Ferry on Christmas night. The army gradually strung out and could not be kept compactly together.

The vanguard arrived at Princeton at dawn and encountered two British regiments under Colonel Mawhood, who had just started for Maidenhead to join Brigadier-General Leslie at that place. There were but two British regiments and three troops of light horse at Princeton and had Mawhood started his march a little earlier, or Washington's advance-

guard arrived a little later, perhaps the Brunswick raid might have been possible. Mawhood, with no thoughts of having encountered anything beyond a wandering body of militia, threw his two regiments forward for a brisk encounter. It became something of a race for position between fresh British troops and Brigadier-General Hugh Mercer's tired men, for an apple orchard. The Americans won and held the British by their fire until Mawhood succeeded, by a bayonet charge, in clearing the orchard after some hand-to-hand fighting in which General Mercer was mortally wounded. Not until Mawhood emerged from the orchard did he realize that the troops he was pursuing were only the advance-guard of the whole American Army; but being a good soldier and his troops being fresh and capable of quick movement, Mawhood extricated his regiments from what might have been a fatal situation and made good his retreat. In his report to Congress, January fifth, Washington gave the British regiments credit for a gallant resistance and states that they left "upwards of 100 dead in the Field" and three hundred prisoners, fourteen of whom were officers. General Howe, putting as good a face as possible on the matter, reported his loss as seventeen killed and nearly two hundred wounded and missing. Washington's figures, like all victorious reports, are doubtless too high and Howe's, like all reports of defeats, were too low.

The action at Princeton was the last straw and it snapped the endurance of Washington's troops. The men were physically unable to make the forced march necessary for a raid on the British stores at Brunswick. They had fought one engagement the day before and, after a forced night march of six or seven hours over a frozen road in freezing weather, had been forced to fight again, this time an engagement that had entailed much rapid movement over open fields. They could do no more and the exhausted infantry dragged themselves northward, while a rear-guard destroyed the bridges behind them and blocked the pursuing troops of Cornwallis, which came hurrying back from Trenton in a wild hope of overtaking "the old fox" who had outwitted them. But they arrived too late and Cornwallis drove them pantingly on to Brunswick, for he knew how rich a prize those stores would be for the hard-pressed Americans. The professional soldiers of Britain, when opposed to Washington in the field and outwitted by him, immediately grasped his purpose, while Washington's self-appointed critics of later years busy themselves in attempting to prove that Washington never could have thought out such purposes.

Cornwallis was right, but Washington had been obliged to forego the prize and was leading his jaded troops toward Morristown. "My original plan when I set out from Trenton," wrote Washington to Congress, "was to have pushed on to Brunswick, but the harrassed State of our own Troops (many of them having had no rest for two nights and a day) and the danger of loosing the advantage we had gained by aiming at too much, Induced me, by the advice of my Officers, to relinquish the attempt." On the march to Morristown he wrote to Major-General Israel Putnam from Pluckamin, January fifth, that he would rest the troops at Morristown for a few days, and to General Heath, the same day, he confirmed the Morristown idea as a post of rendezvous: "I shall draw the force on this side of the North River together at Morristown, where I shall watch the motions of the Enemy and avail myself of every favourable Circumstance." He suggested that Heath move down from Peekskill and feint an attack on New York to draw the British troops then in New Jersey over to Manhattan Island and so relieve the pressure on the west side of the Hudson and give the impression that the country was ready, at the first signs of British disaster, to overwhelm the King's troops on all sides. This was the bogey of the militia, which was a rather prominent bogey in the plans of all the British commanders, throughout the entire war. It was the greatest service that the militia performed, for though the British generals were pretty well informed as to Washington's troop strength at all times, this indefinite and sudden militia reenforcement was a doubtful element which could never be accurately estimated. Consequently it was always over-estimated and acted as a check upon many British plans. It was the sudden springing up of armed men from nowhere that staggered the British on the bloody retreat from Concord to Boston after the handful of minute men had been swept aside at Lexington, and this was as vivid a recollection with the British as was Bunker Hill. After St. Leger's, Baum's and Burgoyne's defeats in which the sudden swarming of the militia played a prominent part, from the British accounts, the militia bogey became almost an obsession with the enemy, and Washington, though he knew perfectly well how little help the militia really were, knew also the value of intimidating the enemy with imaginary fears. Despite Howe's superiority of numbers he never again seriously considered an extensive movement in New Jersey.

CHAPTER XLII

TRAINING A NEW ARMY—HOLDING THE BRITISH— DESERTIONS AND MORE DIFFICULTIES

MORRISTOWN and the year 1777 marked the point from which the main Continental Army marched and fought entirely according to the plans and purposes of General George Washington. The last week in December, 1776, was really the beginning of this new military condition, but January 1, 1777, marked the creation of an army enlisted for three years, or for the duration of the war, and so brought into existence, for the first time, a force that could be trained effectively. But this permanent army did not assemble overnight; the month of June had come before Washington's force had slowly mounted to eight thousand men and neither the eighty-eight battalions, nor the sixteen additional Continental regiments, authorized by Congress after months of debate and argument, were ever complete as to numbers.

It took Washington a year and a half to shake himself free from the difficult military tangle into which the war had been led by the political management of Congress and, so far as the raising of troops was concerned, the country never changed completely from the system of short enlistments and the militia policy of the the beginning of the war.

The limited enlistment term and stupid adherence to the militia idea arose from a mistaken economy and an inane sophistry which disregarded the actual existent menace of British bayonets in centering upon the fear of a future standing army of native Americans.

The disastrous methods of the past interfered with new enlistments and it was depressingly ironic that these old methods had created a state of mind among the militiamen which prevented thousands of them from enlisting in the Continental line. "If the Enemy will give us time to collect an Army levied for the War," cried Washington, "I hope we shall set all our former Errors to rights"¹ and "If we can only get the new Army compleat and the Congress will take care to have it properly supplied, I think

we may, thereafter, bid Defiance to Great Britain and her foreign Auxiliaries."²

But by the middle of 1777, after obtaining a force, partly respectable in point of numbers, the question of training that force was still to be answered. Washington's understanding of human nature was greatly needed to support his patience in this difficulty. He expressed that understanding to Lord Stirling, January 19, 1777: "A people unused to restraint must be led, they will not be drove." And until the Continental Army acquired discipline and training it could neither be led nor "drove" by its commander-in-chief.

From Princeton to Morristown the Continental Army moved by easy stages, but once Morristown was reached and the troops more or less settled in quarters, the militia which had stood by Washington on the desperate dash from Trenton to Morristown, began to feel the usual homesick yearnings and Washington reported to Congress that his army would again soon be non-existent unless reenforcements speedily arrived. About eight hundred New England Continental troops remained and part of these would leave at the end of January and part the middle of February. There were five Virginia regiments "reduced to a handful," the Pennsylvania German regiment, a Maryland regiment and seven hundred Massachusetts militia who would stay until the middle of March. "Thus you have a sketch of our present Army, with which we are obliged to keep up Appearances, before an Enemy already double us in Numbers and who, from every Account are withdrawing their Troops from Rhode Island to form a junction of their whole Army and make another attempt to break up ours, or penetrate towards Philadelphia."³

Again the necessity of magnifying his strength was operating to prevent Washington receiving badly needed reenforcements. In his letter to John Parke Custis, January twenty-second, Washington admitted that he knew not how they would "be able to rub along till the new army is raised. . . . Providence has heretofore saved us in a remarkable manner, and on this we must principally rely."

It was this reliance on Providence, to which Washington was so often brought by necessity, that developed in him a firm faith that nothing could shake. From the time he had counted the bullet-holes in his coat, after the hideous slaughter on the banks of the Monongahela, to the white

flag that waved over the breastworks at Yorktown, George Washington encountered so much absolute evidence that the Almighty moved in aid of human liberty that his sane and common-sense intelligence built up a great and lasting faith. No man in America knew and saw so clearly the terribly thin ice over which the United States skated to victory and as he witnessed, time after time, the absolutely hopeless situation better itself when all human endeavor had failed to save it, George Washington's faith became a living factor in the struggle for American liberty.

The barbarity of the British in New Jersey had been such that Congress appointed a special committee to examine into the facts. Washington, of course, was called upon to aid the investigation. It was but another of the hundreds of matters transferred to his broad shoulders, with which he should not have been bothered: "To take a particular Account of all the Ravages and devastations would be endless," he wrote, so with canny intelligence, he confined his investigations to the treatment accorded by the British to those who had subscribed to Howe's declaration of allegiance. This gave point to Congress's investigation, as these people were British sympathizers. Also Washington's letter to Samuel Chase, chairman of the committee, February 5, 1777, contained the surprising information (surprising not only to Americans of 1777, but it may be surprising also to some of those of the present day). "One thing I must remark," wrote he, "in favor of the Hessians, and that is that our people who have been prisoners generally agree that they received much kinder treatment from them, than from the British Officers and Soldiers. The Barbarities at Princeton were all committed by the British, there being no Hessians there."

Again, at the beginning of 1777, the old trouble of the states increasing their bounties for recruits threatened to disrupt the efforts to raise the badly wanted army. This time it was Massachusetts which raised her bounty and Rhode Island conceived the idea of raising some state regiments for local service and to raise them by paying them four pounds a month, when the Continental recruits were getting but forty shillings. Washington patiently pointed out that this meant that the Continental recruiting would come to a stop until the four-pound-pay regiments were completed. Behind the Rhode Island move was, of course, the self-preservation idea, that the state could not depend upon aid from Washington's

army and must take measures to defend itself. Like many other states Rhode Island could not see the necessity of thinking of the union first and Rhode Island second. The amount of unnecessary strain put upon Washington is unbelievable; only a careful reading of his correspondence will show the complications under which he continually labored. His letter to the New York Committee of Safety is an instance and is a record also of his patience in meeting difficulties:

I should be unhappy in the belief that any part of my Letter to you could be construed into the slightest hint, that you want to interfere in the Military Line. Heaven knows, that I greatly want the Aid of every good Man, and that there are not such enviable pleasures attending my Situation, as to make me too jealous of its prerogatives. Rather than complain of your late Efforts in the Military Way, you deserve the Thanks of us all, And I feel myself happy in this opportunity of returning you mine, in the greatest truth and Sincerity.

Well aware of his own weakness, Washington knew that Howe could march from Brunswick to Philadelphia in 1777, even more easily than he had marched to the Delaware in 1776, and therefore he expected such a movement; but Howe could not persuade himself that such a march was possible. Washington's position at Morristown had forced the British commander to abandon his line from Brunswick to Trenton and the rebel position was still as threatening, potentially, as it had been. It seems likely too that Howe never fully trusted his spy reports and was inclined to doubt the accuracy of the figures brought him, of Washington's strength. The bogey of the American militia, previously mentioned, had weight as a force of unknown thousands which might arise, unexpectedly, and overwhelm the British calculations.

When the British reenforced Brunswick Washington was sure that this was but the prelude to another march across Jersey, with Philadelphia as the object. He could not know that his Trenton-Princeton campaign had shaken Howe's confidence and that his later shows of activity in swooping down from Morristown on every British foraging party that ventured into the country had accomplished in full measure precisely the effect desired. These skirmishes had usually ended in British retreats and in the Red-coats losing the greater number of men, owing, as Washington wrote his brother John Augustine, "to our superior skill in Fire-arms."⁴

Near the end of March, Howe began collecting wagons at Amboy, New Jersey, and, as he had already sent ten thousand or more troops to Brunswick, Washington felt sure that the opening of the campaign was at hand. At this time the Continental Army consisted of about three thousand men fit for duty; a thousand more were under inoculation for smallpox and, with a few hundred militia, formed a pitiful force with which Congress had so grandiloquently hoped that Washington could confine and totally subdue the British before they were reenforced. Washington had written to Congress, March fourteenth, in replying to this pompous resolve, expressing how great would be the pleasure with which he would fulfil its orders, but blandly and with perfect politeness asking Congress to point out how it could be done with the small force at his disposal. The military situation was, in fact, becoming tense for America. Washington was straining every nerve to harass the British foraging parties, which was the only form of activity the enemy displayed and, strangely enough, he succeeded in checking them so successfully that the enemy was finally forced to send out expeditions of fifteen hundred to two thousand men in order to insure that the party could return without being roughly handled. Such large foraging parties defeated their own purposes, for they were too unwieldy to move rapidly, the prime factor in a foraging expedition, and the American light troops kept them so continually on the alert by sudden attacks upon different parts of the column, that the quantity of supplies the British succeeded in gathering was hardly worth the effort. The result was that New Jersey was practically closed to Howe as a source of supplies and the British felt the loss.

In the Continental Army, desertions suddenly began to increase and this was laid to the higher bounties offered by Massachusetts and Rhode Island for the home-guard regiments. The men could not withstand the temptation to sneak off home and reenlist for the extra money.

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CHAPTER XLIII

THE NORTHERN DEPARTMENT—CHAPLAINS

THE spring of 1777 passed by with the main Continental Army at Morristown, while Washington strove energetically to increase its strength and train its men. This training at best was mediocre, though it was all the American officers knew of the military art. Another year was to elapse before Baron Steuben gave the Continentals their first real military training. Even so elementary a thing as the enlisted man's salute to an officer had not been standardized. Howe made raids at Peekskill, New York, and Danbury, Connecticut, and in repulsing the latter Brigadier-General Benedict Arnold was wounded. The losses in property and military stores were considerable, but the net result of both raids was a greater bitterness against the British and an increase of American patriotism which was worth far more to America than the value of the property destroyed.

Except for the Peekskill and Danbury raids, Howe did not move, and when the American force had grown to eight thousand men, Washington determined to force Howe's hand, though he knew from his spies that there were about five thousand British at Brunswick and the same number at Amboy, with more than double this in New York. The persistent contention that Washington moved more or less blindly through the war, by those who deny him all military talent, is pitifully ignorant or deliberately slanderous. These critics either do not know, or deliberately ignore, among other evidences, the letter to Joseph Reed, June 23, 1777:

We have among us, and I dare say generals, who wish to make themselves popular at the expense of others, or who think the cause is not to be advanced otherwise than by fighting; the peculiar circumstances under which it is to be done, and the consequences which may follow, are objects too trivial for their attention. but as I have one great end in view, I shall, maugre all the strokes of this kind, steadily pursue the means which in my judgment leads to the accomplishment of it, not doubting but that the candid part of man-

kind, if they are convinced of my integrity, will make proper allowance for my inexperience and frailties. I will agree to be loaded with all the obloquy they can bestow, if I commit a wilful error.

The one great end Washington had in view was winning the war and he had already demonstrated that a major plan for accomplishing this was a war of attrition, of skirmishes and raids, avoiding at all times a general engagement, unless the odds were heavily in his favor. For, as long as an American Army was in the field, America was unconquered. It is this that makes the Revolution more of a military activity than anything else. It was this that brought French aid, for had the army been wrecked in an ill-advised conflict, or had Washington not been able to hold it together and give it life, the Revolution would have collapsed beyond all hope of recovery. It is little short of astounding that Congress could not, or would not, see this truth, but wasted lives, money and effort in hampering both the army and Washington. The old bogey of a military dictatorship was a fearsome thing to many honest-minded but short-sighted individuals; but this fear also furnished to some clever, unscrupulous men a lever, whereby they could move sentiment in ways designed to bring complete control of all matters into their hands.

Washington challenged Howe, by moving down from Morristown and Howe met the challenge by moving out against him with eighteen thousand men. Cornwallis was sent out in a flanking move that caught Lord Stirling unawares and drove him in on Washington's main force, with the loss of two hundred or more men and some artillery. But the little American Army could not be driven away from Howe's front. The "old fox" of Trenton and Princeton eluded the British grasp yet remained near enough to his pursuers to puzzle and exasperate Howe. It was evident that Washington, after challenging, did not intend to accept Howe's gauge of battle; it was evident also that the American General was not entirely in a retreating frame of mind. Howe's memory subconsciously reached back to what had happened at Trenton and Princeton and Washington's adroit boldness convinced the Briton anew that it was unsafe to attempt Philadelphia by a march across Jersey.

Howe recalled his troops from the field and set about his leisurely preparations to capture Philadelphia by sea. This Philadelphia obsession

of Howe was part and parcel of the European training, where the capital of a country was the high prize and its capture usually ended the war. But America, a frontier nation, did not conform in any way to the rules of European warfare. The United States in 1777 was a mere tenant in Philadelphia and could move as easily to another city as a merchant could move his store. It seems to have been adequately demonstrated that Major-General Charles Lee, then a prisoner with Howe, had nothing whatever to do with this Philadelphia move, that he did, in fact, advise against it. Lee's treason when examined carefully for its effect on America, amounts to nothing more than the name the Indians gave him, "Boiling Water." Lee's manuscript, "Scheme for putting an end to the War," merely damns him as an egocentric scoundrel. His facility with the pen, for he was a writer of some original brilliancy who was proud of his literary skill, may explain in part the insane and completely dishonorable performance.

Howe, having withdrawn his troops from Jersey and begun preparations for an embarkation, of which Washington was promptly informed by spies, was transformed from a physical menace to a mental one, and before Washington was finally sure of the destination of that naval expedition his nerves were worn ragged by suspense.

When Howe withdrew his troops from Jersey Washington seized the opportunity thus presented to make a shrewd political move. With an eye to the losses sustained by the inhabitants in the area which had been occupied by the British, he sent down several wagon-loads of meat and flour to the destitute civilians,¹ which was not only a sympathetic move, but excellent politics in the contrast it presented between the American and British treatment of non-combatants.

The news from the north then began to overshadow everything else. Lieutenant-General John Burgoyne had begun his march from Canada and General Arthur St. Clair had abandoned Ticonderoga to him without firing a single shot. Burgoyne's expedition from Canada, which seemed to America a threat of disaster, was in reality the beginning of victory. Curiously enough, this expedition which wrecked the war for the British was a concession to personal ambition; it ruined Burgoyne by elevating him above his ability and it furnished a ladder to an American general by which he attempted to climb to ambitious heights, also above his ability to maintain. In both cases it was the blind conceit of the English military

man, for Major-General Horatio Gates was an ex-British Army officer. Burgoyne's paternity and connections in England were sufficient to gain for him many honors that would have been denied more capable men, and having already had some experience in the American war, Burgoyne pleased himself with the idea that he could gain fame and glory by a smashing, independent campaign and, perhaps, succeed to the commander-in-chiefship in America. The personal ambition behind the Burgoyne expedition is sufficiently indicated by the evidence that Burgoyne was permitted to submit three different plans to the King. The one selected, with Germain's approval, was the march south to Albany by way of the lakes.

The loss of Ticonderoga aroused a storm of criticism in Congress, not so much because of the loss of that fort, nor because no resistance had been offered to Burgoyne's progress, as because it offered the first good opportunity to New England to attack Schuyler, who commanded the Northern Department and, through this attack, to elevate Gates, who had been spending most of his time since December, 1776, in Philadelphia intriguing with Congress.

Major-General Arthur St. Clair, who commanded at Ticonderoga and evacuated the place before Burgoyne arrived, was a soldier of mediocre abilities and, although in retreating he did precisely the proper thing, his action let loose the contents of a Pandora's box upon the already difficult situation in America.

Major-General Philip Schuyler was cordially hated by New England and the patriotism of the Revolution did not always rise above these local provincial prejudices. The stated causes of this dislike are so complex and so trivial, in the New Hampshire Grants phase, that the case appears to be more one of propaganda on the part of the controlling powers than an existent dislike among the common people. The main reason for this propaganda appears to have been the scheme to elevate Major-General Horatio Gates, and as Schuyler stood in the way, Schuyler was marked for destruction. In this scheme the Massachusetts delegates in Congress were the prime factors. Samuel Adams, than whom a more unscrupulous demagogue never existed, even went so far as to hint darkly at treasonable purposes in St. Clair and Schuyler. St. Clair, although the responsibility for the evacuation was definitely his, was merely a bird-dog in the uproar

of criticism, for the entire weight of accusation was gradually heaped upon Schuyler. A year and a half later a court martial acquitted both generals.

Congress directed Washington to order both Schuyler and St. Clair to report to his headquarters and to select a commander for the Northern Department. The Massachusetts-Gates faction was not yet quite strong enough to carry things through with the high hand it wished. Here the Virginia gentleman's natural reaction against cheap inconsistency in official management saved Washington from becoming entangled in what was fast developing the most disgusting and dishonorable political embroglio of the Revolution. Though Washington was well aware that Congress as a unit did not support and approve of him, it is inconceivable that he knew fully, as yet, of the Massachusetts support of Gates and the lengths to which it was willing to go. Congress had already declared that the Northern Department was a separate entity and was especially under its own control. Washington's firm supporters in Congress had fought for and obtained the resolution giving Washington the choice of the Northern Department commander, but the Commander-in-Chief would not avail himself of the opportunity; being George Washington, he simply could not. He thanked Congress "for the high mark of confidence" but wished to be excused from making the appointment. The Northern Department, he reminded Congress, was considered peculiarly under its direction and he had never interfered beyond giving advice and furnishing such support and supplies as he could. "The present situation of that department is delicate and critical, and the choice of an officer to the command may involve very interesting and important consequences." Congress had on many other occasions been shown by General George Washington that its insistence on the exercise of power was not the same as an intelligent exercise of that power, but governing bodies, like small-minded individuals, refuse to admit their mistakes and when the mistakes are pointed out they, like individuals also, immediately begin to dislike the person who points them out. Washington's letter, dignified, respectful and polite, played into the hands of the Gates faction and Gates, elected to the command of the Northern Department where a leader was sorely needed, forthwith demonstrated what was to be expected of him by loitering upon his journey and not reaching his command for weeks.

CHAPTER XLIV

BURGOYNE AND HOWE—THE BATTLE OF BRANDYWINE

NEAR the end of July Howe finally sailed out of Sandy Hook with a force of nearly fourteen thousand men but, despite Washington's spies, his destination was unknown to the American General. After embarking, Howe had been held many days in New York harbor by contrary winds and so sure was Washington that the move was to be up the Hudson, to cooperate with Burgoyne, that he marched north as far as West Point and held his army in Smith's Clove, a wild mountainous pass behind the Highlands.

When Howe finally sailed, Washington still thought the movement might be a feint to draw his army southward, too far away from the Hudson to be able to return before the fleet could come back and run up the river.

Burgoyne's march from Canada did not develop the high war strategy planned, but after he started his march, the only "rational end in view" the British could have "must be a junction of the two armies."¹ Perhaps Howe knew, or at least suspected, the influences behind the Burgoyne expedition and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that herein may be found an explanation of the indifferent or at least casual attention he gave to it. Certainly it seems plain that the British Commander-in-Chief did not intend to consider Burgoyne's march as a major operation of the American war.

Though the British idea of the Burgoyne expedition may have been tainted with the granting of opportunity to a court favorite to gain glory, Washington was not at all doubtful that such glory could spell disaster to America's struggle for liberty. His letter to Major-General Israel Putnam (December 2, 1777) on the importance of the Hudson River, down which Burgoyne proposed to move, or up which Howe might be expected to sail, settles the value of the possession of that waterway to America:

The importance of the North River in the present contest, and the

necessity of defending it, are subjects which have been so fully and frequently discussed, and are so well understood that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them. . . . It is the only passage by which the enemy from New York, or any part of our coast, can ever hope to cooperate with an army from Canada; that the possession of it is indispensably essential to preserve the communication between the eastern, middle and southern States; and, further that upon its security, in a great measure, depend our chief supplies of flour for the subsistence of such forces, as we may have occasion for, in the course of the war, either in the eastern or northern departments, or in the country lying high up on the west of it.

Here is more than clear understanding of the subsistence and transportation problem of an army; it is recognition of the British supremacy in sea power, as well as the fact that sooner or later the enemy would develop a campaign against the states, from Canada.

This Canada advance seemed so inevitable to Washington that even while he was marching south to protect Philadelphia from Howe's fleet he could not help continually casting his eyes behind him in the direction of the Hudson.² Not until the British ships were well into Chesapeake Bay did Washington feel confident that there would be no cooperation with Burgoyne.

Sir Henry Clinton was left in New York City by Howe, with a force so small, according to Clinton's ideas, that he expressed the opinion that Washington was a blockhead if he did not attack the city. He could not understand why the American commander was not willing to lose Philadelphia in order to gain New York, a typical English reasoning, which was as far below Washington's mentality as was Howe's. Clinton, in his disgust with Howe at being placed in a situation where his military reputation was unduly risked, failed to consider what Washington could do with New York City after taking it. The American Army would have been practically ruined in storming the city and once Washington's army was shattered, the war was won for the British. If, by a miracle, Washington captured both Clinton and New York, with very little loss, he could not hold the place a moment longer than it would take a squadron from Howe's fleet to return from the Chesapeake. But seven or eight thousand British troops could not be driven from the defensive works of Manhattan

Island without heavy loss and Sir Henry's reasoning was more a reflection of Sir Henry's pique than intelligent criticism of Washington. There is something amusing also in Clinton's strictures of Howe for leaving him in danger in 1777, when it is remembered that Sir Henry was, in his turn, abused by Cornwallis in 1781, for practically the same thing.

Howe's fleet finally appeared in the Delaware, and Washington, his doubts resolved, set out confidently but in surprised wonder, on his march to defend Philadelphia. Then to the amazement of every one, the British fleet again put out to sea, steering eastward as long as it could be seen. It was impossible for Washington to know that Admiral Howe refused, even for his brother, to risk his ships up the Delaware, believing reports that the river had been filled with obstructions. The tides and marshy shore were also considered a danger and it is said that the fleet officers declined to attempt to disembark Howe's army. These arguments, if they were used, were forgotten later by the British Admiral as he sailed his ships boldly up the Delaware to meet his brother's troops when they marched overland from the Head of Elk, on Chesapeake Bay.

When the fleet again put out to sea from the Delaware Capes, Washington was sure that Howe was finally headed for the Hudson, or for some destination eastward or southward, other than Philadelphia. If eastward, or New England, the American Army was needed there, if southward, the only things for which such an armament as Howe's was needed, were the capture of Charleston or Savannah, and these were too far distant for the Continentals to aid. The British could take either of these places long before Washington could arrive by the overland route. So there was left only Burgoyne, and Washington faced his troops about. But his march toward the Hudson had barely begun when news came that the British fleet had been seen off Sinepuxent Bay, Maryland. The Continentals were halted and another anxious time spent until word was finally received that Howe's purpose was positively disclosed by his being far up in the northern end of Chesapeake Bay.

Washington's army faced about and again marched south with confidence. His troops were not only insufficiently clothed but there were practically no uniforms and the pitiful expedient was adopted of having each man in the ranks wear a sprig of green in his hat to give a touch of uniformity as the army marched through Philadelphia. The necessity for

such an expedient should have aroused Congress to action but the worst suffering of the army as to clothing, as well as food, followed closely upon this exhibition. The baggage and camp followers which would have ruined whatever little effect the nondescript equipment could produce, were not permitted to move through the city with the troops but were sent around it.

Washington spent a short time in conference with Congress before joining the army to meet the British who were advancing slowly from Maryland. Lacking maps and being unacquainted with the country, he reconnoitered the roads and contours with an escort of light horse, before deciding upon the best position at which to make a stand. This reconnoiter has been made the occasion of vicious criticism by a great-grandson of a man whose egotism bequeathed to his descendants a blind prejudice against Washington; but it should be remembered that if Washington had not made this reconnaissance and had depended upon information brought to him by others, this particular blast of criticism would have been just as bitter on the score that it was Washington's duty to inform himself rather than trust to the observation of others in so important a crisis. That Washington knew the strength of the British Army which landed at the Head of Elk is beyond doubt. The basic instruction to all spies, at all times, was to get the names of the British regiments concerned in a movement; estimates or opinions of numbers were not wanted. Once he knew the regiments, Washington could estimate the strength of the British much more closely and accurately than spies could judge. He knew the names of the regiments which had embarked at New York and he knew the number of ships and transports used, and the way in which the transports had been fitted out; these points and a general rough idea of the quantity of supplies embarked gave him a fairly accurate knowledge of the British force. There seems little doubt but that, in point of numbers, Washington's forces nearly equaled those of Howe, though Washington's total included several thousand militia and his Continentals were not yet the trained soldiers he needed. Opposed to him was an army of trained professional British and Hessian troops and the result was what was to be expected.

Washington's position at Chadd's Ford on the Brandywine was a well

chosen ground on the direct route to Philadelphia by the road the British were traveling. Howe never seemed to grasp the principle on which Washington fought the entire war, which was never to risk the destruction of the Continental Army, to fight whenever necessary but to maneuver at all times to avoid that ultimate risk. With his mind set upon Philadelphia, Howe regarded Washington merely as an obstacle in his path, while Washington, forced to make a show of defending Philadelphia to avoid the political effect of handing it over to the enemy without resistance, picked his battle-field with an eye to neutralizing the British superiority and sent off his baggage to Chester; an almost positive proof that he expected his undisciplined and green troops to be forced back. It was practically a battle fought by the American Commander-in-Chief with the idea of holding the British, taking advantage of any unexpected turn of events on the battle-field, damaging the enemy as much as possible and retreating in good order, when the worst came to the worst. Retreat was inevitable and the event proved the wisdom of Washington's foresight. It should be remembered, however, that the battle of Brandywine was lost, not in the center where Washington was stationed, but on the right wing where the slow-thinking General Sullivan duplicated the stupidity³ he had displayed at the battle of Long Island and was outflanked with ridiculous ease in 1777 by precisely the same maneuver that accomplished it in 1776.

To describe the Brandywine defeat briefly, Washington's left wing, composed of Armstrong's Pennsylvania militia, held the east bank of the river below Chadd's Ford; Washington with the center was at the ford itself and Sullivan, commanding the right wing, was to prevent a crossing by the enemy at any point above the ford. The ground to the east of the Brandywine was hilly and broken, but not more so than that to the west through which the British had to advance. It could be well defended against the short-range artillery and musketry of the Revolution; but this defense was only possible where the defending force was as well trained as the attackers. This was not the case with Washington and the British advantage of superior discipline was bound to tell heavily in just such a terrain. The hills and slopes to the west enabled the British to march undiscovered until they crossed the Brandywine above Sullivan; but that General should have known of this movement the moment the enemy

reached the river. He not only did not know of the British crossing, but remained completely ignorant that the enemy was on his side of the Brandywine several hours after they had crossed. Washington has been criticized for riding forward in the face of the British, to make sure of his information at the Head of Elk; if Sullivan had done the same at Brandywine he would not have been surprised.

The Hessians under Lieutenant-General Knyphausen held Washington's attention at the ford with an artillery bombardment and a show of intending to cross, while Howe and Cornwallis marched from Kennett Square on the Chester road, far back from the ford, to a point six miles above the forks of the Brandywine, which was far beyond anything within the compass of Sullivan's imagination. Washington had received information of this turning movement before the British had crossed the Brandywine, and at once, under the impression that Howe, in moving to Chadd's Ford, had lost his way, ordered Sullivan to cross the Brandywine and attack the British column; but Sullivan sent back word that the report was a mistake, there were no British in the vicinity and Washington countermanded his orders. Then came a civilian's report that the British were where Sullivan said they were not, and the civilian, being a native, was vehemently positive. Here was a dilemma. Washington had already received much evidence that the inhabitants of the region were British sympathizers and he had had much experience with the excited imaginations of civilian reports as to the enemy; his own general reported differently and, as a soldier, he was bound to believe his officer rather than a civilian. Unfortunately the civilian was right and the result was a crushed right wing, a rapid withdrawal of the center and a retreat toward Chester, fighting a rear-guard action until Howe and Cornwallis ceased pursuit, from weariness and the approach of night. The British flanking troops had marched over twenty miles since daybreak and fought a stubborn engagement through a hot and blistering afternoon. Howe's opinion of the Hessians, so bitterly expressed after Trenton, may have been a reason for his not entrusting Knyphausen's comparatively fresh troops with a pursuit of the Americans.

Greene was ordered by Washington to cover Sullivan's retreat and check the British. He succeeded well in carrying out his orders, but Washington's hope of seriously damaging the enemy had been shattered

by Sullivan's blundering. He had now to exert himself to the utmost to prevent the British from seriously damaging him and the left wing retreated, under cover of Greene's rear-guard defense, with the rest of the army, to Chester.

The British loss was nearly one hundred killed and four hundred wounded and missing. Howe's estimate of the damage he had inflicted was three hundred killed, six hundred wounded and nearly four hundred prisoners. Major-General Nathanael Greene estimated the American loss at about twelve hundred all told. Some of the cannon sent over from France by Beaumarchais were captured by Howe. Again Washington had suffered a defeat through the failure of one of his general officers to measure up to a situation.

CHAPTER XLV

LAFAYETTE—DE BROGLIE AND DUCOUDRAY

AT BRANDYWINE the Marquis de Lafayette (Washington called him Fayette and the letters to him are indexed under F in Washington's letter-books) actively entered the Revolution and received a musket-ball through the leg, which incapacitated him for some weeks. The story of how he disobeyed the orders of the French King in his enthusiasm for the cause of American liberty and slipped out to sea on the *Victoire*, under the name of Gilbert du Motier, is well known. Not so well known is the fact that he came over with Baron de Kalb, who played an important part in his embarkation; forthwith raising the question of the extent to which the Prince and Comte de Broglie were involved, and what benefits it was hoped would accrue to the Comte and Prince by having Lafayette on their side of the scheme they attempted to develop.¹

Lafayette, a sincere and enthusiastic admirer of Washington from the first, ignored the de Broglie scheme, if indeed he was aware of it, and de Kalb, who had been sent to America by the de Broglie régime before the Revolution, on his return with Lafayette, saw then the impossibility of the de Broglie idea. Vergennes being the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Maurepas, the Minister of State, willing to listen to Vergennes, there was nothing encouraging in France for de Kalb and his part in America became that of an embittered and sardonic soldier of fortune, whose fortune had failed him. He died the death of a brave and gallant man on the field of Camden. Be it said to his credit that he had absolutely nothing to do with the Conway Cabal.

Lafayette landed at Charleston, South Carolina, and traveled overland to Philadelphia to present himself to Congress as a volunteer. He met Washington in Philadelphia, before the battle of Brandywine. The Marquis's enthusiastic gesture of young idealism was of stimulating value to the United States; and as a revivifying influence of American morale, Lafayette's coming was of tremendous importance. How much he ac-

complished in this respect can not be measured, but there is no denying that his presence in America, his unquenchable fire and youth and the many stories and anecdotes of him that soon began to circulate through the country were worth as much as regiments. The imagination of America was captivated by him and his presence with the army was an influence that not only permeated the ranks but spread through them to the civilian population.

It was but natural that America should have attributed to Lafayette a great deal of credit for the French secret aid, which had begun to arrive through Beaumarchais before the Marquis landed, and to credit him also with the French alliance and open assistance which came a year later. He was brave, he was generous, he was enthusiastic; he spent himself and his fortune freely in the cause of America and asked nothing in return but the privilege of helping; he shed his blood for America and counted it as nothing, he helped in every way he could to the limit of his physical, material and mental powers and his value to the morale of the army was immense; but the French secret aid and the French alliance would have occurred just as they did had Lafayette never been born. But he was born, he came to America and became the friend of Washington. This was his greatest and most cherished American honor.

When the Revolution was under way, a stream of foreign military volunteers set in toward America. Many of these soldiers of fortune came by way of the West Indies and most of them were French. The crying need was for officers, for trained professional soldiers, engineers and artillery officers especially, and Congress with thoughtless liberality, bestowed commissions without investigation. Later, when the real officers came and found these early arrivals enjoying unmerited rank, they naturally expected higher rank for themselves. Silas Deane, in France, with his mind fixed only on the desperate needs in America, was lavish in his assurances and agreements. He sent over many valuable officers, Lafayette, de Kalb, Steuben, Duportail, Armand, Fleury and others whose names deservedly stand high upon the honor roll of French aid to America. Franklin was responsible for Pulaski and others of equal fame, but both he and Deane made many mistakes at first and these mistakes were a plague to Washington. Deane's worst mistake was Ducoudray, who was the officer selected by France to secure and prepare the arms, artillery and supplies

from the royal arsenals which were shipped by Beaumarchais in the secret aid. Deane had agreed that Ducoudray should command the artillery and engineers in America, and while undoubtedly he was a better and more experienced officer than Knox, the idea of placing a foreigner above all Americans in America's own war for freedom was too impossible. Ducoudray, ambitious and supercilious toward America's untrained officers, aspired to the title of commander-in-chief of the two corps and seems to have had an idea of making an independent, separate department of them. From there on his ambition envisaged greater heights. Both Greene and Knox handed in their resignations conditionally to Congress, on the report that Decoudray was to be given rank according to Deane's agreement and the resultant trouble taxed Washington's diplomacy and influence severely. Fate intervened and Ducoudray was accidentally drowned while crossing the Schuylkill during the Brandywine-Germantown campaign and a serious situation and dangerous source of trouble in the conduct of the war disappeared.

In the de Broglie difficulty, already alluded to, Deane made an inexcusably careless slip in the way of a thoughtless remark about the command of the armies in America, which the Prince immediately seized upon as an opportunity that might be turned to advantage in his struggle to regain power in France. The matter related to French politics rather than to French aid and did not come to a head in America, where it was only an undercover gossip; but to this may properly be attributed Washington's coldness toward Deane. The idea of a French commander-in-chief for all the armies of the United States was unthinkable in Washington's Americanism and it would have been just as unthinkable to him had some one, other than himself, been commander-in-chief, for while Washington would have been perfectly willing to admit that the Comte de Broglie was a better trained soldier than himself, he would have foreseen in their entirety the insurmountable difficulties such a situation would present to winning America's liberty.

Lafayette was entirely unconnected with the politics of either France or America. His freedom from all agreements and connections gave him an advantage of position and his untrammelled services were such that America can never pay him too great honor. He was nineteen years old when he came to America and was given a major-general's commission by

Congress. This, although a befitting honor from the standpoint of his family connections in France, was a dangerous authority to grant to an immature youth who, for all his willingness to serve as a volunteer, intended as a Frenchman of noble blood to maintain his rank and position at all times with the Americans. It was a difficult part to play but because of Lafayette's honesty of soul he succeeded.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN

BRANDYWINE, for all that it was a defeat for the American Army, did not destroy Washington's force, as Howe so confidently implied in his dispatches home, and so far failed to dispirit it that the British General expressed great surprise at the vigor of the American assault at Germantown three weeks later.

Despite all the reports of panic in the retreat from Brandywine to Chester, within a week the army was collected, organized and marched to Schuylkill Falls, from whence, on September fifteenth, it moved down the Lancaster road toward the advancing British. Doubtless it was largely due to Howe's lethargic disposition that he remained in the vicinity of the Brandywine battle-field the day following his victory. But it may at least be questioned if what happened on the battle-field did not inspire a dilatory nature to further slowness. Washington reported to Congress that his troops, despite their defeat, were in good spirits and Howe, though he made sweeping claims in his dispatch to the British Ministry, may not have felt so entirely confident that Washington's army had been crushed. It would have been, apparently, a very simple thing to have marched eastward from the Brandywine into Philadelphia by way of Chester, had he felt it entirely safe to ignore Washington. Instead of this Howe chose to march slowly northward in pursuit of Washington and his defeated army.

Again the dignity of Congress was ruffled by the necessity for a hurried flight and this fact did not weaken the influence of the anti-Washington faction. In the usual way of legislative bodies, Congress felt that Washington was to blame for the physical inconvenience to which it was subjected; not remembering that the size and efficiency of the army was entirely the result of Congress's own muddling incompetency. September sixteenth, Washington again sent off the baggage of the army as a precautionary measure (he did not meet up with his own impedimenta again until after the army had settled down at Valley Forge), for with the same

troops, about eight thousand Continentals and three thousand militia, he had determined to attack Howe, who had advanced to the vicinity of White Horse Tavern and Yellow Springs. Brigadier-General Anthony Wayne, whose troops had sustained Knyphausen's thrust at Chadd's Ford a few days previously, made the first attack on Howe's right wing as an autumn rain began. The rain increased to a downpour and the downpour became a torrent until the ammunition of both armies was ruined and both were drawn from the field by their respective commanders.

The ammunition of the Revolution was in cartridge form for both muskets and cannon. It was home-made until Washington succeeded in having "elaboratories" established at various points, where men were continually employed in making cartridges. One of these was at York, Pennsylvania, and another at Brookfield, Massachusetts, afterward moved to Springfield, which has become the oldest continuous magazine arsenal in the United States. The proper quantity of powder was rolled into a thick paper cylinder, with the ball plugging one end and the other tied tightly to prevent a powder leak; before slipping this down the barrel of the musket, the soldier bit off a portion of the tied end so as to expose the powder. The cartridge was then rammed down the barrel, crumpled tightly in place by pressure of the ramrod. The bitten end of the cartridge with its loose powder came directly beside the pan of the flintlock, so that when the spark touched the priming, which had to be placed in the pan by the soldier, the flare was communicated to the powder cartridge in the barrel. This sounds complicated, but in reality it was simple and the piece exploded instantly with a force not to be despised. There is a record of a revolutionary musket crushing a man's breast-bone by its back-kick and of a ball going through an inch of oak before killing a man. The paper cartridges were easily ruined by dampness and Washington strove for a long time to obtain a waterproof "cartouche box"; these were finally made of tin, which answered fairly well.

Before Congress left Philadelphia, it again entrusted Washington with dictatorial powers for a sixty-day period. These dictatorship grants by Congress are amusing examples of legislative futility. They may be likened to a village board of fire commissioners who hamper their fire department chief by turning off the water, disconnecting the hose, misplacing the ladders and interfering in every way while the building is burning

and when, as a result of their interference and lack of support, the blaze gets beyond control, throw all the gear and apparatus in a heap, tell the chief to take complete charge and stalk majestically away to rest under the nearest tree. Only there was little of the majestic in the hurried move of Congress to York.

On September twenty-sixth, Cornwallis marched his divisions into Philadelphia unopposed; but Billingsport and Fort Mercer, at Red Bank on the Jersey shore of the Delaware River, and Fort Mifflin on Mud Island in that river, well below the city, blocked the communication between the British Army and fleet, which had sailed around from the Chesapeake and found its way stopped by these fortifications and cheveaux-de-frise obstructions in the river.

Washington determined to maintain these posts as long as possible, not only because they separated the British Army from the British fleet, but because as long as this communication was blocked, Howe had to maintain strong guards for his line of supplies from the fleet in the lower Delaware to Philadelphia. Fortescue's *History of the British Army* states that three thousand men were needed for this service. Howe's main body encamped at Germantown; Cornwallis controlled Philadelphia with a respectable force, and early in October Washington learned, from intercepted letters, that Howe had detached a force into New Jersey to capture the Delaware River forts. This left the main body of the British smaller in numbers than it had been for some time and Washington determined to attack.

The plan of battle for Germantown, as well as the battle itself, was another of the many occasions on which the Continental Army proved that courage and endurance can not make up for a lack of training and discipline. It was also one of the occasions in which Washington took the sporting chance that a successful surprise of the enemy would carry his half-trained troops through to victory. Half-trained troops may, and often do, defeat veterans by a sudden surprise attack, but in a drawn-out contest discipline and training will always win, if the odds are not too great, in any battle that resolves itself into a test of endurance.

At the battle of Germantown, Washington moved his army down two roads, somewhat as at Trenton, with bodies of militia from Pennsylvania on the right and from New Jersey on the left; by roads which made the

extreme distance between these outside militia forces about seven miles. That the Commander-in-Chief expected little from these militia is evident. Continental line officers seldom relied upon the militia; experience had shown the futility of it and at Germantown Washington thought of them only as forces that would deal additional blows to the fleeing enemy, after the Continental troops had scattered them by the surprise attack. Unfortunately, the surprise attack was not successful as planned because of that lack of discipline which handicapped the American Army until after Baron Steuben's training began to show results in 1778.

Nevertheless the surprise of the British at Germantown was complete, the retreat of their various units attests the unexpectedness of the American attack and statements of various British officers confirm it. Sullivan and Wayne were the first to arrive on the ground with no knowledge, or means of knowing whether Greene, on the other road, had kept pace with them. They encountered and drove in the British pickets, but unfortunately for Washington's plan, the British troops first encountered were commanded by an exceptional soldier in Lieutenant-Colonel Musgrave, who, before the day was over, wrecked the chance of American victory. As he was pushed back, fighting every rod of the way, he seized and barricaded himself with about one hundred men in the massive stone residence of Benjamin Chew. Sullivan and Wayne pushed on and the British, lacking Musgrave's stubborn rear-guard support, began to give way, despite Howe's presence. A heavy, autumnal morning fog made things difficult for both sides and by the time Greene's troops arrived on the field, it seemed that nearly every one had lost his sense of direction. The center reserve corps, under Stirling, had by now reached the Chew house and with Greene's troops were annoyed by musketry fire from the windows. There was a difference of opinion as to what to do, whether to pass on and leave a regiment to watch the house, or whether to take it by storm. Here was an almost perfect example of the inexperience of the American officers. A trained soldier would not have hesitated a moment and General George Clinton is said to have stated afterward, that if General Washington had left a corps to observe the house and pushed onward, there is no telling what might have been the consequence. But this was afterward. No American officer at the time seemed to be sure of what was best to do. Knox, who was strongly in favor of waiting until the house was captured,

could make no impression of consequence upon it with his light field-pieces, which does not speak well for the American field artillery. An assault was attempted and repulsed, but by then too much time had been lost. The veteran British soldiers were recovering from the shock of surprise, and discipline was automatically drawing them into their accustomed military formations. The brigades of Wayne and Stephen ran into each other in the fog and, each believing the other to be the British, fired and added to the American losses by shooting each other down. The British were rapidly finding themselves and as rapidly getting back into action with the steadiness of the professional soldier. It was here that the results of discipline were plainly apparent, for despite the fog and smoke, the confusion and firing, the British companies and regiments established contacts with one another and immediately moved forward with an understood method of repulsing an enemy, while the American forces became more and more disorganized and more and more unable to recognize or keep in touch with one another. To add to the trouble, the American cartridge supply ran out and the first companies that wavered and fell back for this reason, started the movement to the rear, which quickly got out of hand and became a precipitate retreat on all sides. Major-General Nathanael Greene's division had to fight its way through some of the advancing British before it could get safely off the field.

The retreat continued for about twenty miles but there are no evidences that it was a rout. The men were worn out by the long march to Germantown the night before, and their hard fighting, and it may be that they were too completely exhausted to react, even to panic once the retreat began. An unfortunate aspect of this battle was the number of officers who were afterward brought before courts martial on the charge of drunkenness on the battle-field. Major John André mentions that many of the American privates and some of the officers who were captured, were under the influence of liquor. An all-night march and early-morning attack upon the enemy gave no opportunity to prepare food. Hours of fighting in fog and dampness without food, naturally led some of the officers and soldiers to consume the liquor ration in their possession. The result was inevitable.

Washington's losses at Germantown were estimated at something over a thousand, more than half of which were killed and wounded. Of the

missing he stated that many of these probably should have been counted as deserters, being men who, after being separated from their commands, would return home and stay there. The British loss was roughly about half that of the American and with no prisoners, as those taken at the beginning of the conflict made their escape when the attackers fell into confusion in the fog.

There is no justification for considering Germantown even a drawn battle. Washington again had been defeated through the lack of disciplined steadiness in his troops, but the effect of the battle, outside of the encouragement it gave to the anti-Washington influence in the Continental Congress, was almost equal that of a victory. To the rank and file of the Continental Army it provided a stiffening of morale which was more than valuable. The troops were well aware that they had driven the British regulars and felt that had they not become confused by the fog, they would have scored a complete victory. Regardless of the fact that this may have been rather far from the truth, with the rank and file of the Continentals believing it, the value was evident. It convinced Howe, who seldom seemed to require much convincing, that Washington was still to be reckoned with, and Brandywine and Germantown should undoubtedly be credited with a deciding influence upon the resignation Howe sent home to England, October twenty-second, before he settled down into winter quarters in Philadelphia and turned a deaf ear to suggestions from various of his officers to attack Washington's encampment at Valley Forge. After Fort Mifflin was battered into a shapeless ruin and the British fleet obtained complete control of the Delaware up to Philadelphia, Howe moved out from the city and offered battle to Washington, but it should be noted that he did not force a contest, beyond maneuvering hither and yon in an effort to draw Washington into conflict upon chosen ground. There was skirmishing and, at times, some sharp work for a few moments, but the number of killed during the days when the two armies marched and halted, while the British made one or two forages in force, was insignificant considering the number of men involved in these movements. Howe finally withdrew into Philadelphia and the Continental Army went into winter quarters at Valley Forge.

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CHAPTER XLVII

VALLEY FORGE—BRITISH PEACE MOVES—THE FRENCH ALLIANCE

VALLEY FORGE is inscribed in the history of America in the burning letters of starvation and misery, all the more bitter for its having been unnecessary. There was abundant food in the country and an abundance of material supplies of all kinds. That the troops at the Valley Forge encampment did not obtain them was due almost entirely to the interference of Congress with the Commissary and Supply Departments of the Continental Army. Early in 1777, Congress determined to regulate the Commissary Department and completely separated the Purchasing and Issuing Departments with the purpose of having them act as a check on each other, but the confusion at once became worse than ever. The checks and counter-checks became so tangled that nothing could be accomplished and the troops nearly perished from starvation and froze for lack of clothing. Joseph Trumbull, formerly Commissary General, a son of Governor Trumbull of Connecticut, had been under criticism from various quarters, almost from the beginning. The jealousies and bitterness aroused by the separate Northern Department and the commissary scandals therein during the Montgomery-Arnold expedition in 1775-76, had arrayed New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut against one another along commissary lines and, of course, the Gates-Schuyler feud did not help matters much in this respect. James Duane, of New York, wrote to Schuyler, June 19, 1777, describing the struggle in which Jacob Cuyler was appointed to the Northern Supply Department: "We had a delicate card to play which required much Address to get this office into the hands of a fellow Citizen for the Northern Department. our Eastern Neighbors were in possession and worked hard to maintain their Ground."¹ But by November, 1777, commissary affairs, instead of improving under the new Congress regulations, were in a worse state than before; the depreciation in value of the Continental currency was another factor that was making

itself felt, and the prevailing Tory sentiment in the country about Valley Forge was the final element in an unfortunate situation. The British in Philadelphia were not straitened for country produce, which went into the city from all sides despite the strenuous efforts of the Continental dragoons to intercept it. Could Washington have paid "hard money" for supplies there is little doubt that the country people would have supplied him bountifully; but their patriotism was not proof against British gold and silver, when the value of the Continental paper money was daily growing more doubtful.

The selection of the position at Valley Forge was the result of a consensus of opinion of the general officers, who submitted their ideas to Washington in writing. A position somewhere along the line between Reading and Lancaster, one along the line between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers, and Wilmington, Delaware, were the positions favored. Count Pulaski was opposed to the army going into winter quarters and pleaded to be allowed to camp near Philadelphia and annoy the British by raids; Greene, who favored Wilmington as a position, nevertheless wanted bodies of militia posted along the Schuylkill-Delaware line; Stirling and Sullivan definitely mention the Valley Forge area and Knox and Maxwell located their choice in that vicinity without mentioning the place. Congress wished the army to take a position that would protect the country, and the remonstrance of the Pennsylvania Legislature against any location that would leave the country north of Philadelphia exposed to the British foragers, caused Congress to interfere and request a report from the Commander-in-Chief. Congress felt that the state of New Jersey also should be given as much protection as possible. This last had decided weight with Washington and possibly Abraham Clark's letter to Lord Stirling (December twentieth) may have been the deciding influence, when so many of the officers had approved in general of the area north of Philadelphia. Stirling undoubtedly showed Clark's letter to Washington. Clark wrote that they had been much alarmed by a report that the army would go into winter quarters at Wilmington, thereby leaving Pennsylvania and New Jersey open to the enemy. Congress had before it the opinions of the officers, and the New Jersey delegates were greatly pleased to "find you in favour of the valley near Schuylkill, which in the judgment of all or most I have met with is the only place for defending the

Country and preventing Supplies to the Enemy." It should be noted that for all the criticism directed at Washington for the selection of Valley Forge this location was some thirty miles nearer the enemy than the proposed Reading-Lancaster line and much nearer Philadelphia than Wilmington. This, from a military view-point, would be either more advantageous or more foolhardy. It proved to be precisely the location to impress Howe, who never was able to forget the idea of thousands of militia swarming in to Washington's assistance whenever the need arose.

That Washington's decision in favor of Valley Forge was approved by Congress was evidenced by the resolve of December thirtieth, ordering a month's pay extraordinary to the soldiers; but the suffering undergone at Valley Forge would have occurred had the army been stationed at any other point in Pennsylvania. Congress announced to the soldiers that it was exerting itself to remedy the inconveniences which the army had lately experienced from the defects of the Commissary and Clothing Departments and one of these was to extend the impress powers granted Washington, September 17, October 8 and December 10, 1777, to April 10, 1778, which was the true Congressional method of tying things up into a hard knot and tossing the tangle to George Washington to unravel.

November fourteenth, Congress resolved that General Washington be informed that Congress wished him to seize clothing from the loyalists to supply the wants of the army and at the same time to pay a reasonable price for what was seized. How Washington was to accomplish this without a supply of money was a detail with which Congress did not see fit to bother.

December tenth, after praising Washington's forbearance in exercising the plenary powers granted him, Congress stated that it was the desire and expectation "that General Washington should, for the future, endeavor as much as possible, to subsist his army from such parts of the country as are in its vicinity, and especially from such quarters as he shall deem most likely to be subjected to the power or depredations of the enemy." All stock and provisions serviceable to the army were to be taken from the inhabitants, leaving only enough for the maintenance of families. Grain was to be threshed out under penalty of having it seized and paid for as straw, and all wagons and stock were to be removed or destroyed.

These rather officious resolutions drew from Washington one of his few crushing rejoinders to Congress, dressed, as always, in such smooth politeness of phrase that it is doubtful if that body realized that it had been rebuked. Washington wrote, December fourteenth-fifteenth, that Bucks and Philadelphia Counties were entirely exhausted and probably "reluctance to give distress restrained me too far," but, wrote he, with the weary patience of a teacher, explaining the elementals to dull scholars, "the prevalent jealousies of military power an evil apprehended by the most sensible among us" were such that he wished to avoid any act that might increase it. After thus showing Congress that the cause of the difficulties lay in Congress itself, he again exhibited that wise statesmanship which placed him head and shoulders above his contemporaries. He recommended that the civil power of the states would take over the impress as the people "have ever been taught to yield a willing obedience [to civil orders], without reasoning about their propriety," and had always looked with a jealous eye upon the exercise of military power. This, in effect, was telling Congress that as it had always objected to and blocked all efforts to develop the military machine into an efficient, permanent body, it would be better for Congress to continue along those lines than to call in the military power to act, at this late day, where the civil authority should more properly bestir itself.

The position taken for winter quarters of the army was really not at Valley Forge at all, but in front of the two hills which formed one side of the valley that gave the forge its name. A road ran between these two hills to the Valley Creek on which stood the forge, and Washington's headquarters were in the valley, but the army was huddled on the southeast side of the hills. Of these two hills, Mount Joy is the larger, higher and bolder. Two redoubts, called the Huntington and Washington redoubts, were built some distance up the slope of Mount Joy, at about the point where the rise begins to be abrupt. One hundred feet above these redoubts the inner line of entrenchments was marked out astraddle the old Gulph road, three-quarters of a mile down the slope and there were no troops huddled beyond this line. The left flank of the camp rested on the Schuylkill, where what was called the Star Redoubt (from its shape) commanded the Fatland Ford road and the one over the temporary bridge which Major-General John Sullivan had built over the river. The geography of the country

made it difficult to attack the American camp from the northwest. The difficulties for the British to attack from the east were nearly as great, the only sensible point of attack, from a military point of view, was directly in front. It is possible that a direct, massed attack might have driven the Continentals out of their first line, but the two redoubts over a hundred feet up the slope, would have given the stormers a much more difficult task than Bunker Hill. The slope was steep enough to take most of the energy out of the men before they neared the breastworks; the fire they would encounter would be a plunging fire from the two redoubts, enfilading them while they would be exposed the entire time to the fire from the whole army in the last line of intrenchments, one hundred feet above, on the crest of Mount Joy.

No troops in the world could have stormed that last line successfully, in the face of any kind of resistance. The outline of these breastworks along the rim of that bold height is still plainly marked and to-day this sunken grass-grown trench winding its length along the crest of Mount Joy is the most impressive feature of the encampment at Valley Forge. The old stone house which Washington made his headquarters has its message for the patriot-pilgrim but that long line of silent trench, dominating the timbered twilight of the steep and rocky height, tells better than anything else the grim and desperate determination that was the spirit of Valley Forge.

No doubt Howe heard something of the strength of Washington's position and, though he may be criticized for inaction, that inaction was his salvation and Howe was wise to prefer indolence to foolhardiness. In war, of course, the unexpected is quite likely to occur and Howe might have struck and scattered Washington's army before it could settle into its defensive positions; but this was a long chance to take. Washington's army was the essential factor in the Revolution and while all of Washington's strategy was based upon the maintenance of that army, by February, 1778, the French Alliance had placed Howe's army in something of the same predicament. At any time after March, 1778, a major defeat of the British Army meant the loss of the war. Lieutenant-Colonel John Graves Simcoe, that dashing British cavalry leader, wished to attempt the capture of Washington by a sudden raid on Valley Forge, but Howe very wisely withheld his permission. Had Simcoe made his attempt be-

fore Christmas, he might possibly have succeeded, as up to that time Washington lived in his tent, on the same side of Mount Joy as the troops; but after he settled into quarters in Deborah Hewes's home² in the valley behind Mount Joy, it would have been deliberate suicide for Simcoe to have made the attempt. Washington's General Orders help to paint the picture of the Valley Forge encampment. The dark days stretched from the first arrival of the army to the month of April, 1778, and the first three months of 1778 were, in many respects, the most difficult the troops ever experienced. The orders tell of sheet-iron ovens being ordered for each brigade, of tallow and ashes being preserved for soap that should have been delivered out to the men, of hides exchanged for shoes, of a gill of brandy per man being distributed for a New Year's celebration, of hoofs of slaughtered animals being boiled down for the oil that was in them and of the few, very few times, small quantities of clothing and shoes were available at the commissary's store. In January another of the many orders against cards, dice and gaming was issued and a rather inconvenient physical trouble called the "itch" made its appearance in camp. The unfortunates afflicted were ordered to the hospital to be "annointed" and it is to be hoped the cure was not worse than the disease. The orders show how careful at all times Washington was of the health of his troops and if the many orders on the hygiene and sanitation of the various camps of the Continental Army were collected, they would be found to comprise a very good set of rules to handle such conditions even now. The orders for clearing the tents and company streets were pointed; sanitary directions were explicit and full and the personal cleanliness of the soldier was many times harped upon. Even though the men were in rags, Washington insisted that the rags be clean. The situation may be imagined when, it being necessary to make up a supply of cartridges, it was ordered that the cartridge-makers be picked from those who were unfit for duty from a want of clothes.

The Committee of Cooperation, appointed by Congress November twenty-eighth (Robert Morris, Elbridge Gerry and Joseph Jones) to proceed to headquarters and consult with Washington, reached the army December third and spent a considerable part of its time on the questions of winter quarters and a possible attack on Philadelphia. Washington

wisely saw to it that the committee was present at the council of officers held upon these two questions, and after listening to the opinions and discussions, the committee agreed with the officers that an attack on Philadelphia was too hazardous and that the army should go into winter quarters at once. It recommended no location. But the most important and most valuable thing done by the committee was its agreement to recommend to Congress the adoption of a half-pay establishment, a pension system for officers' widows and an equitable mode of settling the back ration account. This pension idea was a very sore point with the New England group in Congress, which feared the standing army bogey and everything that might possibly fasten militarism or military expense upon the country. Washington's efforts to obtain a pension system, or some sort of just compensation for men disabled in the service of the nation had aroused bitter antagonism and dislike in Congress, where none showed greater opposition to all such ideas than the Massachusetts delegates. Now on December twentieth, James Lovell wrote to his mentor, Samuel Adams:

It is evident, among Friends I say it, that our Army was not inclined to fight Howe when he gave them four days opportunity. The Committee therefore could not give it as their opinion to the General that he ought, with that same Army, to force the Lines of the Enemy, or attempt the City by the Schuylkill. In short, unless we secure Half pay to the Officers and pensions to their Widows, and make their Commission vendible, *severe* Discipline in respect to Officers cannot be introduced, and consequently *none at all* in respect to Soldiers. But the General does swear that, if the Commissions are made desirable, he will cashier without favour or affection till the Army becomes vigorous; In this hope we breathe this day; but verily my own Share of Hope is not great enough on this Promise to make me relinquish the Idea of an annual Choice of *all* officers.

Here is Lovell, misinterpreting as a layman, the military situation with the positive cocksureness of his peculiar nature; sniffing scornfully at the unanimous opinion of the American generals, against attacking Philadelphia, an opinion shared in by the French professional soldiers, such as de Kalb and Duportail. His patriotic parsimony as to pensions is plain

and there is justification for believing that he was deliberately lying in saying that Washington had promised to cashier officers. If he did not know that the Commander-in-Chief had no power to cashier officers, that authority resting with a court martial only, he was sadly lacking in knowledge of the Articles of War, which Congress had drawn up and upon which Lovell had voted. His opinions, seemingly, are too well buttressed with prejudice to render his services of much value to the nation. His sycophantic adoption of John Adams's senseless notion of an annual election of all officers of the army³ is matched only by his letter to Gates, November 27, 1777, in the heyday of the Conway Cabal: "We want you in different places, but most of all in a third which you are not called to ballance about. We want you most near Germantown."⁴ On reading this it is easy to see what Lovell meant, when he underscored the word all, in respect to an annual choice of officers. It is measurably plain also that even with one such a man in Congress Washington's recommendations to that body were bound to encounter opposition.

That the Committee of Cooperation, from Congress, which went to Valley Forge and stayed with the army throughout the winter, came over to Washington's view-point is fair evidence that antagonisms and prejudice in Congress were based upon ignorance, as such things always are. The committee's report to Congress was more of a criticism of that body than of Washington and, as a consequence, its findings were disappointing to the group which had expected and hoped to find new grounds for an attack upon the Commander-in-Chief. Instead, the committee even went the length of favorably reporting Washington's plan of half-pay and pensions, submitting it with the common-sense observation that it was not to be expected that only one set of men would suffer for all the hardships and inconveniences while every one else reaped the benefit. The struggle in Congress over the adoption of this report revealed the curious inconsistency of the New England objectors who, though they had so often supported the Adams doctrine of the righteousness of self-interest now objected to the officers acting on that interest.

The question of half-pay and pensions shook Congress to its foundations. Washington was the originator of the idea and as such he was hated with a renewed hatred and fear by those who had been consistently jealous of him since the beginning. The objections found support also among

southern delegates who were strong for economy, so-called, and opposed to establishing a favored class. Washington's long private letter of April twenty-first, to John Banister, one of the Virginia delegates, explains his view-point and is besides an analysis of conditions few of his contemporaries could have made. He wrote that the officers were resigning in droves and not the least backward were the New England and Massachusetts men. Heath at Boston, McDougall in the Highlands and Mason in Virginia were being overwhelmed with applications to resign and were clamoring for instructions. Washington had received ninety applications from the Virginia line alone. Officers could not be blamed for declining to sacrifice themselves and their property for the country, unless that country would make decent provision for their future support. "I dont pronounce absolutely that we shall have no Army if the Establishment fails. But the Army we may have will be without discipline, without energy, incapable of acting with vigor and destitute of those cements necessary to promise success, on the one hand, or to withstand the shocks of adversity on the other." He then touched upon the delay of Congress to settle the matter. Even an adverse report would be better than uncertainty, for then indeed some new measures might be planned. As it was, nothing could be done while Congress delayed. The American officer's commission was worthless while the British could sell theirs for a worthwhile sum. Then too the American officer had to use his own money to maintain himself.

Men may speculate as they will; they may talk of patriotism; they may draw a few examples from antient story of great achievements . . . but whoever builds upon it, as a sufficient Basis for conducting a long and bloody War will find themselves deceived in the end. We must take the passions of Men as Nature has given them, and those principles as a guide to which they are generally the rule of action. I do not mean to exclude altogether the Idea of Patriotism. I know it exists and I know it has done much in the present Contest. But I will venture to assert, that a great and lasting War can never be supported on this principle alone. It must be aided by a prospect of Interest, or some reward. For a time, it may, of itself push Men to Action; to bear much, to encounter difficulties; but it will not endure unassisted by Interest.

The possibility of an "accommodation" with Great Britain in 1778 was even stronger than it was in 1775, for at the outbreak of hostilities feeling was intense and unanimity of sentiment easily obtained; but after three years of war influences other than patriotism asserted their claims, as Washington bluntly pointed out and, though he spoke only of the military service, there were other things than the army demanding consideration. The British, unsuccessful in a military way and suspecting France of soon coming openly to America's assistance (they were already sure that the French King was secretly aiding the rebels), commenced straining every nerve to ensnare the American people by allurements of peace. Lord North's Conciliatory Bills were rushed to America, and special peace Commissioners hastened their preparations to cross the Atlantic to further the hoped-for result. Washington was outspoken in his warnings that the British could not be trusted, but he knew that many unthinking people, wearied of war, would be willing to trust them. As an almost despairing alternative, he emphasized the point that even if the people did incline to accept the British terms, they should at least remember that with an army in the field, they could get better terms than by an abject cessation of all resistance. Washington's idea of the diplomatic situation was remarkably close to the reality:

I think France must have ratified our independence [he wrote] and will declare war immediately on finding that serious proposals of accommodation are made. . . . It cannot be fairly supposed, that she will hesitate a moment to declare War, if she is given to understand, in a proper manner, that a reunion of the two Countries may be the consequences of procrastination. An European War or an European Alliance would effectually answer our purposes. . . . Nothing short of Independence, it appears to me, can possibly do. A Peace on any other terms, would, if I may be allowed the expression be a Peace of War. The injuries we received from the British Nation were so unprovoked; have been so great and so many, that they can never be forgotten.

The wisdom of this analysis shows Washington as practically the only American who grasped the situation in its entirety. What he thought would be France's reaction to the possible "accommodation" with Great Britain,

was precisely what did happen, only the shoe was on the other foot. When Washington was writing this letter, France had signed the Treaty of Alliance with America and it was the growing suspicions of Great Britain that such an alliance was pending which pushed her forward with offers of reconciliation. Washington feared more than anything else that the people would be misled into an "accommodation" with Britain and among other arguments he advanced in his letter to Banister was the idea that if America agreed to dependence under Britain and later was forced to resist the oppression, which would surely come again, no European power could then be persuaded to help her and Washington well knew that such were America's conflicting jealousies that European aid was a necessity for victory. This was his perfect recognition of the difficulty of securing unity of effort from America and of the value of the French secret aid and the French open alliance.

He paid his respects to the indecision and delay of Congress and regretted "that inactivity; that inattention; that want of something which unhappily I have but too often experienced in our public affairs." That something was the patriotic cooperation of Congress with the army, "the jealousy which Congress unhappily entertain of the Army and which, if reports are right, some members labour to establish." Yet the army, Washington wrote somewhat bitterly, has paid more regard to the civil authority of Congress than any other agency. He should have said that the army, because it was commanded by General George Washington, placed the civil power ahead of the military, always.

For without arrogance, or the smallest deviation from truth, it may be said that no History, now extant can furnish an instance of an Army's suffering such uncommon hardships as ours have done, and bearing them with such patience and fortitude. To see Men without Cloathes to cover their Nakedness; without Blankets to lay on; without Shoes, by which their marches might be traced by the Blood from their Feet; and almost as often without provisions as with; marching through Frost and Snow; and at Christmas taking up their Winter Quarters within a day's march of the Enemy, without a House or Hutt to cover them, till they could be built, and submitting to it without a murmur, is a mark of patience and obedience, which in my Opinion, can scarce be paralleled.

A most important piece of business laid before this committee at Valley Forge was the plan worked out by Washington for the organization of the army, which he wished Congress to adopt. Like other important papers drawn up by Washington, it was composed with no thought of self and for this very reason becomes an autobiographical document of high value. The plan, drawn up in the early part of 1778 was entirely the fruit of Washington's experience from 1775 through 1777. The lessons were plain, yet no man in America, other than George Washington, seemed to understand or apply these lessons. Only one point in the plan need be mentioned to show Washington's grasp of affairs and his willingness to compromise and accept part of a mistaken policy in order to get as much of an army as possible. Washington knew that filling the army by volunteers was impossible. By 1778 the time had long passed in which an army could be obtained by a volunteer system. Washington recommended the draft and compromised for a term of service of one year; drafting to begin in each October and the men then in the army to be offered a bounty of twenty-five dollars for reenlisting. He advocated the repeal of the militia substitute law, but was willing to permit the hiring of substitutes by drafted men. Here was a fairly short term of enlistment and this, with the rest of the provisions was a most common-sense and practicable arrangement, based upon a complete knowledge of American feelings, which would produce the greatest number of men with the least possible friction.

The hospitals were a dragging load of responsibility. Rice and Indian meal were the main food staples of the Valley Forge sick and there was justification for Washington's plainly displayed sympathy. The Commander-in-Chief was a firm believer in inoculation for smallpox and managed this delicate business in a way that kept the strength of the army fairly stable, while passing the troops through the transient disability of the manufactured illness.⁵ Washington's handling of this and other health problems of the army was so sane and correct that when Dr. Benjamin Rush, as chairman of the committee of Congress, advised that certain medical steps be taken with the troops Washington was able to inform the doctor that the matter had been attended to before his suggestion was received. No medical man enjoys being forestalled by a layman and this instance may have had something to do with Rush's dislike of Washington

and his lending aid and comfort to the adherents of the Conway Cabal. There were two hospital buildings erected in the rear of each brigade at Valley Forge and Washington established their dimensions and construction in his orders. Directions for camp cleanliness were emphasized; springs were ordered cleaned out, wells were ordered dug, and after the huts were built, an extra window was ordered cut in them for ventilation. The suffering at Valley Forge has somewhat blinded us to many things that happened there. Courts martial were busy, many officers were cashiered⁶ and many punishments inflicted, though it would almost seem that the inconveniences suffered by the soldiers were sufficient punishment for their misdemeanors. A commissary convicted of theft had his hands tied behind him, his coat turned inside out, was mounted backward on a horse and drummed out of the camp; many men were whipped for military crimes and some were hanged for desertion and giving information to the enemy. A civilian who furnished provisions to the British was given two hundred and fifty lashes and a lieutenant of artillery, convicted of theft and absence without leave, had his sword broken over his head and was discharged from the service, which Washington characterized as a mild punishment.

During the winter, reveille at Valley Forge beat at dawn, troop at eight A.M., retreat at sunset and tattoo (taptoo it was called) at nine P.M. The drums began on the right of the line and the beat was taken up successively by each unit on the left. As spring advanced the food situation improved and a market was established in camp (at the stone chimney) for the country people, but it is doubtful if it proved a success, for the low value of the Continental paper money, in which the soldiers were paid, was not enticing to the farmers and there is some evidence of the troops having treated the country people roughly at times. We have no record of the vegetables brought to market, nor of the prices, but the sutlers were permitted to sell peach and apply brandy, whisky, cider, strong beer and common beer and vinegar, along with pig-tail tobacco. In the orders of March first, Washington gives us another glimpse of what Valley Forge had been to the army. He thanked the soldiers for "the fidelity and zeal which they had uniformly manifested in all their conduct. Their fortitude not only under the common hardships incident to a military life, but also under the additional sufferings which the peculiar situation of these

States exposed them. . . . The recent instances of uncomplaining Patience during the scarcity of provisions in camp is a fresh proof that they possess in an eminent degree the spirit of Soldiers and the magnanimity of Patriots." There had been murmurers of course, but Washington passed them by with the reproof that they were now ashamed of their complaints. Among the last orders enjoining sanitation and cleanliness in camp and requesting the men to shave their beards and clean their arms and accouterments, was an order of April 9, 1778, between the lines of which may be read again the horrors of Valley Forge: "The General therefore calls upon every officer from the Major General to the corporal inclusively for their exertions, hoping thereby, with the blessing of God, to prevent such number of deaths which unfortunately have happened since we came to this ground.""

The end of March saw the beginning of the real training of the army under Baron Steuben, when one hundred choice men were added to the Commander-in-Chief's Guard to receive instruction and serve as a model corps for the whole army. With the warmer weather the camp life became easier in every way and Ensign George Ewing, of the New Jersey troops, records that Washington played a game of wicket with the officers and that there was a theatrical performance in the Bake House, which was crowded beyond capacity. In April the Commander-in-Chief complained of the number of courts martial being held which, as they were on trivial matters, he suspected were the result of personal animosities. Officers, he said, should consider themselves brothers and settle private disputes among themselves rather than burden the public files with records that would, in the future, reflect disgrace upon themselves and the army, a point which it was typically Washington-like to notice.

But though Valley Forge plumbed the depths of suffering and gloom, so to Valley Forge came the greatest message of hope and encouragement. On May 1, 1778, Washington broke the seal of a letter addressed to him by General Alexander McDougall, commanding in the Highlands of the Hudson, and read words that sent his blood tingling through his veins for there in black and white was the fact above all other facts he had hoped for; the fact without which, he knew the Revolution was doomed. France had signed a treaty of alliance with the United States! McDougall had the news from Simeon Deane, who had just passed through Fishkill on his

way to Congress from France, with the treaty itself in his possession. As Deane had told the news to every one along his route from Boston to Philadelphia, Washington felt free to mention it to some of his officers, but did not announce it to the army until he was authorized by Congress. But in the light of that knowledge it is most interesting to read the General Orders of May second: "The Commander in chief directs that divine services be performed every Sunday at 11 o'clock in those brigades to which there are chaplains; those which have none to attend the places of worship nearest them. It is expected that officers of all Ranks will by their attendance set the example to their men. While we are zealously performing the duties of good citizens and Soldiers we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of Patriot it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian." Next he came as near to divulging the great news as it was safe to come: "The Signal instances of providential goodness which we have experienced and which have now almost crowned our labours with compleat success, demand from us in a peculiar manner the warmest returns of Gratitude and Piety to the Supreme Author of all Good." The news of the treaty was published to the army in the General Orders three days later.

This Continental Army's celebration of the signing of the treaty was a spectacular event. The troops were paraded in long ranks and at the end of an artillery salute of thirteen guns, the infantry fired a *feu de joie* or running fire of musketry from one end of the line to the other down the front rank, then back again through the rear rank. Cheers were given for France, the United States and the friendly European powers, with thirteen cannon-shots and a *feu de joie* between each cheer. All the military prisoners of the day were pardoned, each officer and man was ordered to deck his hat with a nosegay of blossoms and a gill of rum was issued to every man. An arbor was erected and the officers and their wives indulged in an open-air banquet, at which, according to report, the Commander-in-Chief appeared most cheerful, for victory at last appeared to be in sight.

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CHAPTER XLVIII

THE CONWAY CABAL

THE most distressing and distasteful chapter of the entire Revolutionary War was written during those dark days that the army camped at Valley Forge. This chapter has been labeled by historians the Conway Cabal, but the title, however assigned, is entirely misleading as to the affair itself and seems to have exercised for years a baneful influence in preventing a truthful exposition of the scheme. Major-General Thomas Conway, the Irish-French officer whose name has been fastened to the intrigue, was far from being a principal actor therein. He was not even a catspaw, as has been so often glibly explained. It was through his indiscretion as a letter-writer that the Cabal came into the glaring light for all men to see, but by tagging the disgraceful affair with his name attention has been diverted from the real conspirators.

The Cabal consisted of two fairly distinct parts: one the military; the other the New England coterie in the Continental Congress, which was dominated by the Massachusetts delegation. Curiously, the military clique consisting of Gates, Mifflin, Pickering, Conway and others, with their minds and eyes fixed upon their own personal ambitions, were entirely blind to the main purpose behind the support accorded them by the clique in Congress. The military ambitions, with their contemptible smallness, betrayal of trust and inexcusable dishonesty met with a deserved end as soon as the matter came to light. The Congress intrigue did not surrender so easily, but fought viciously and, even after it went down to defeat in the signing of the Treaty of Alliance with France, the individual members of the coterie struck back at Washington, time and again, as long as they remained in Congress, in a vague hope of developing a weakness which might be used to advantage. It is a distasteful story at best and it will be touched upon here only in so far as it affects the story of George Washington. The Continental Congress side of it forms the larger part of the partizan politics of the entire Revolution.

Conway knew next to nothing of the purposes and plans behind the intrigue in which he became involved; he thought only of the benefit he hoped would accrue to himself from its success. Major-General Horatio Gates, who was in the coil deeper than Conway and who stood to gain the greatest benefit from the scheme, may have known a little of the real motive behind the movement; but he also was too wrapped up in the personal fortunes of Major-General Gates to give it much thought or to care very much about it. The rest of the officers, Mifflin, Pickering and others, swayed by their jealous natures and small ambitions, thought of nothing beyond the power and rank that would accrue to them with the success of the scheme.

For the beginning of the Conway Cabal, we must look into the politics of the Continental Congress in 1775, before General Conway was known in America. And this beginning is found in the Ticonderoga expedition of Ethan Allen and with the later entirely unconnected efforts of Horatio Gates to win the friendship and confidence of the Massachusetts legislators and men of influence in that colony. It is a long and tortuous trail and needs a special volume entirely devoted to this one subject to develop it properly.

A number of unconnected and unrelated dislikes and prejudices, jealousies and hatreds gradually found a common object and centered upon a common purpose, in which the removal or downfall of General George Washington became an important factor. Unfortunately, Washington himself unconsciously contributed to fanning the flames of prejudice and dislike. In his private and personal letters he expressed opinions not at all complimentary to the Massachusetts gentry, and these opinions were whispered in Virginia and rumors of them drifted back to the Congress at Philadelphia and to New England. The forged, or spurious, letters of Washington, which William Carmichael stated were concocted by the little coterie of expatriates in London,¹ for the few shillings such performances would bring in, while entire fabrications, were nevertheless based upon some of these whispers in America. Though Washington's strictures of the Massachusetts officers and men were severe they were more expressive of a disappointment that the New Englanders did not measure up to the standard attributed to them, than deliberate fault-finding, but the damage done was the same.

No definite purpose developed from the conglomerate feelings at first. It was a composite of bitterness at not being able to keep control of the supply trade, and dominance of officers. The first outstanding manifestation was the controversy of Massachusetts with Connecticut over the Ticonderoga expedition, wherein the latter colony, with understandable pride, outstripped Massachusetts and thus publicly, though unintentionally, flouted the Massachusetts guidance of the revolutionary movement. Silas Deane furnished the money and the energy that made it possible for the Connecticut troops to join Ethan Allen, before Massachusetts could get fairly started. Deane was to suffer for this later.

The feeling was carried to Philadelphia, to the floor of Congress, where the Massachusetts delegates strove to build up a party group which could be depended on to support the purposes of Massachusetts. To these efforts are to be attributed the alliance between the Adamses of the New England commonwealth and the Lees of Virginia, wherein Samuel Adams was the hidden but directing force while he remained in Congress, and continued to exercise a measure of control through James Lovell and others, when he was no longer a delegate. The outlines of this alliance are plainly to be seen in the correspondence of these men,² but a full grasp of their activities requires long and intensive search which would lead far afield from George Washington, even into the diplomatic correspondence in foreign archives. The control of the revolutionary movement passed away from Massachusetts with the adoption of the army by the Continental Congress, the very thing which Massachusetts had moved heaven and earth to bring about as a matter of self-preservation. Then, precisely as in the election of Washington as commander-in-chief, Massachusetts immediately became a critical, almost antagonistic influence against the very situation she had created. The control of the army and of its supply departments passed from Massachusetts and her troops became subject to the orders of strangers. At once she began to consider and watch these stranger generals from Virginia. The commanding general, George Washington, was catalogued almost at once as a person who held himself above the New England yeomanry and his efforts to introduce subordination and discipline into the army were considered a proof of his fancied attitude of disagreeable superiority. Actually there seems to have come to the surface, perhaps subconsciously, the old Cavalier-Roundhead prejudice.

Charles Lee, that strange eccentric who gloried in satire, was an impossible creature to the New Englander; Thomas Mifflin, of Pennsylvania, did not arouse much confidence and of all the strange generals to whom her sons became subject, only Horatio Gates, then adjutant-general, seemed human to Massachusetts. Gates was a suave, natural-born intriguer, possessed the advantage, in Massachusetts eyes, of English birth and the glamour of being an ex-British Army officer, and this, added to his smooth and careful flattery, made a most favorable impression. Massachusetts schemes began to germinate, though the shape and form of the full-blown blossom was as hidden from Gates as from any one. As the conduct of the siege of Boston centered in Washington, he became the object of critical watchfulness by the self-sufficient Puritan democrats, who found themselves naturally antagonistic to the rank distinctions and subordination insisted upon by the Virginia cavalier. Gates, untrammelled by any responsibility beyond the pushing of the Gates ambitions, spent hours in socially cultivating the Massachusetts functionaries, where Washington, burdened with cares that allowed small time for social relaxation, seems to have been looked upon as unapproachable by the Massachusetts worthies.⁸ A neglect on his part to invite sundry important gentry to dinner at headquarters seems to have increased the prejudice.

Washington was also handicapped by the Massachusetts idea that he had ousted Major-General Artemas Ward from the chief command, and that he was only a political compromise general who had displaced local genius. From this to the notion that through Washington Massachusetts had lost control of the military situation, was an easy step. The situation being thus in 1775, and the idea of an "accommodation" or compromise with Great Britain still prevalent throughout the colonies, a cooling of the first hot enthusiasm of those who started the revolutionary movement was to be expected. The calculating natures of those who, at this time, bore the brunt of it, made it inevitable. No one knew this better than the wise American who commanded the army at Cambridge. September 24, 1776, he wrote to Congress: "When Men are irritated, and the Passions inflamed, they fly hastily and cheerfully to Arms; but after the first emotions are over, to expect . . . that they are influenced by any other principles than those of Interest, is to look for what never did, and I fear never will happen."

There was then no diminution in the Massachusetts efforts for independence for it was evident that the colonies must gain some positive advantage before they would be in a position to negotiate with Great Britain, even for an accommodation. But long before the Declaration of Independence was voted, Massachusetts' struggle for control had shifted its main direction from the army besieging Boston, to political control in the Continental Congress. This condition in Congress was well described by Edward Rutledge in his letter to John Jay, June 29, 1776:

The Idea of destroying all Provincial Distinctions and making everything bend to what they call the good of the whole, is in other Terms to say that these Colonies must be subject to the Government of the Eastern Provinces. The Force of their Arms I hold exceeding Cheap, but I confess I dread their over ruling Influence in Council. I dread their low Cunning, and those levelling Principles which Men without Character and without Fortune in General possess, which are so captivating to the lower class of Mankind. . . . I am resolved to vest the Congress with no more Power than what is absolutely necessary, and to use a familiar Expression to keep the Staff in our own Hands; for I am confident if surrendered into the Hands of others a most pernicious use will be made of it.⁴

John Adams was bitterly critical of the lack of discipline among the American troops. This criticism was characteristic of that to which Washington was subjected. It was blind to the fact that the lack of discipline was largely due to the undisciplined New England habits, which refused to admit the necessity of military authority or to give unhesitating obedience to military orders. Blaming Washington for poor success in enforcing discipline and blaming him also, at the same time, for taking the only measures which could enforce it, did not strike New England political reasoning as illogical.

Independence voted on July second, and the Declaration adopted on July fourth, the problem confronting the states was to make that Declaration good; the most important step toward which was to obtain aid from Europe. Without this, it was plain, the voted independence could not be maintained. Fortunately for America, the then political situation in Europe was such that France was becoming the dominant power and was

slowly, but surely, neutralizing England's influence on the Continent. Immediately upon issuing the Declaration, Congress prepared to send commissioners abroad to obtain national recognition and supplies and to negotiate treaties. Precisely at this point was created a prejudice which manifested itself as one of the most powerful influences in the so-called Conway Cabal. Arthur Lee was elected by Congress a commissioner to France, along with Deane and Franklin. Deane, sent to Europe in March by the Secret Committee, had already been marked for punishment by the Massachusetts delegates in Congress because of his activity in forestalling the Bay State in the Ticonderoga expedition. Absurd as it seems, this forestalling of the Massachusetts management of the Revolution aroused the bitterest feeling, probably because of the tremendous and ringing triumph scored by an expedition not managed by the Bay State. The fact that strenuous claims were made after the affair was over; that John and Samuel Adams were claimed to have been in Hartford (before they had left Worcester) advising the Connecticut authorities on forwarding the expedition, is indicative of the feeling at the time. Samuel Holden Parsons wrote rather bitingly to Trumbull, June 2, 1775, of the Massachusetts competitors for the honor of responsibility for the expedition and continued: "but some cannot bear an equal and none a superior, and all make representations at the expense of truth, to monopolize what ought to be divided."⁵ Silas Deane was called "Ticonderoga" Deane in the Continental Congress. He made mistakes in France, as any business man is apt to do when handling a big business matter complicated with politics; but he was not financially dishonest, as has been charged. His first and biggest mistake was in excluding Arthur Lee from the Beaumarchais business of secret aid, yet it is difficult to see how he could have done otherwise. The matter was most dangerous. The destiny of France was, practically, in the keeping of Beaumarchais and Deane, and Beaumarchais was not permitted to have anything to do with Lee because Vergennes mistrusted Lee and, with such a secret, which meant war with England before France was ready for the step, the fewer people who held that secret the better. But Arthur Lee's suspicious nature was precisely the kind that fattened on such a situation. Not knowing, he imagined, and imagining he misrepresented; he accused and criticized and in the end with the help of Richard Henry and Francis Lightfoot Lee in the Congress, aided and

abetted by the Adamsses, he dragged Deane down. Benedict Arnold, likewise marked for chastisement, was kept out of his deserved major-general's commission by Massachusetts influence and this was the beginning of *his* embittered feeling which made a man of his peculiar temperament an easy prey to the wiles of British influence and British gold. The punishment meted out to Deane and Arnold, in both cases the result of petty jealousies, was among the first acts of the intrigue which later developed into the Conway Cabal; but General George Washington, while already disliked as the greatest obstacle to regaining control of the army by Massachusetts, had not yet been sufficiently weakened in Congress to make a move against him either successful or safe though the busy little moles kept burrowing industriously. When the time seemed ripe, John Adams delivered himself of a speech in Congress, which is more remarkable as a self-analysis of John Adams than as a smashing attack, as he intended it to be, on General Washington. "Certain principles follow us through life," he declaimed sonorously, "and none more certainly than the love of first place." He was sorry to find, he said, that it prevailed so little in Congress. This, instead of being the wise thought of a sage, is a blatant acknowledgment of the ambition which governed Adams. He then went on: "I have been distressed to see some members of this house disposed to idolize an image which their own hands have molten. I speak here of the superstitious veneration that is sometimes paid to General Washington. Altho' I honor him for his good qualities, yet in this house I feel myself his Superior. In private life I *shall always* acknowledge that he is mine."⁸

The jealous struggle of the inferiority complex of a small nature is here too evident to need comment, beyond calling attention to the fact that this anti-Washington feeling in the most influential Massachusetts delegate, existed before the Gates victory at Saratoga or the Washington defeats at Brandywine and Germantown.

The next move in the struggle for control came with the Canadian expedition of Montgomery and Arnold in 1775. The commissary and quartermaster supply questions here become a bitter contest revolving around Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York. Major-General Philip Schuyler as commander of the Northern Department, a position which fell to him almost naturally, because of his ability, wealth and influence in New

York, was marked for ruin because of his management, for which Massachusetts had no enthusiasm, and because of Bay State prejudice against Schuyler which dated back to his handling of Massachusetts troops in the French and Indian War. When the Canadian expedition under New York and Connecticut generals failed, Horatio Gates, backed by his Massachusetts influence in Congress, was appointed to the command in Canada. When the army retreated from that country, Gates bumptiously claimed the command of the Northern Department, which Schuyler naturally refused to relinquish. Gates appealed to Congress but he had not then developed sufficient strength in that body and his appeal was lost. Then came the evacuation of Ticonderoga by St. Clair and Massachusetts managed to fix the blame for that upon Schuyler, as commander in the department, and Gates superseded the New Yorker. One of the arguments used was that when reenforcements were badly needed for Canada, New Englanders would not enlist for service under Schuyler. It was decidedly clever to excuse a plain lack of Massachusetts patriotism by fastening the blame for it upon a New York general.

With Gates reaping the benefits of Schuyler's hard work in obstructing Burgoyne's advance, of John Stark's independent victory over Baum at Bennington and of Arnold's reckless bravery upon the battle-field at Stillwater; Washington, blamed with the defeats of Brandywine and Germantown and the loss of Philadelphia, was subjected to the greatest fire of criticism he had yet encountered. The Massachusetts delegates came out in the open, and used Gates, his Saratoga victory and his overweening ambition, in an herculean effort to drag Washington down. Had they succeeded, Gates would have been made commander-in-chief and being their own made-creature Massachusetts once more would be in control of the army. What would be the effect upon the Revolution and Independence was either ignored or was carefully calculated in terms of an accommodation with Great Britain, wherein the controlling party in Congress would have the complete say. Washington stood in the way of this carefully thought out scheme. After the Declaration of Independence, it was useless to consider him as agreeing to an accommodation with Great Britain that did not acknowledge the Independence of the United States, for George Washington, though he did not sign the instrument which pledged life, fortune and sacred honor to abide by it, nevertheless felt

himself bound by those ties and never once did he weaken his allegiance, even in thought; a thing which can not be said with truth of some much lauded patriots who signed that document.

The secret aid from France, great as it was, was not enough. The colonies, now states, were not able to put forth enough strength to use that aid of money and supplies to defeat Britain, but the causes of this inability require too much space to be entered into here. An alliance with France was an absolute necessity, principally because an open alliance would mean that France would enter the war on the side of the states, and with France at war with England, the British Army in America could not be heavily reenforced, the British fleet would have many other things to do besides blockading the American coast and the small United States Navy and the privateers, together with the small army, would then have a better chance against whatever troops Britain could keep in America. It was an alluring dream, but dreams seldom come true.

Arthur Lee crossed from England to France and arrived in Paris about the same time Franklin did from America. He found Deane the one man who could, or was permitted to, accomplish anything and Deane was evidently involved with a strange genius named Beaumarchais, a French playwright, who had turned merchant and through whom Deane was shipping quantities of supplies to America. Demanding explanations and getting none, the suspicions of Lee were aroused. Was Deane dabbling in commercial profiteering and bleeding America? What did this Beaumarchais merchant have to do with the diplomatic affairs of the United States? With a nature like Arthur Lee's it was but a short step from suspicion to jealousy and hatred. Deane did not bother to explain; Franklin was rather vague; Lee acted like Lee. He wrote his suspicions to his brothers in the Continental Congress and soon succeeded in making himself an impossible diplomat in France. He was so snooping and suspicious that Beaumarchais felt obliged to reassure Vergennes: "I have always," he wrote, "made a great difference between the honest deputy Deane, with whom I have had dealings, the insidious politician Lee and the taciturn Dr. Franklin."⁸ Vergennes wanted Lee out of France and wrote of the desirability of Mr. Lee not remaining in Paris during the negotiations with his associates. "It would be very fortunate for us to be rid of that Deputy, who is very troublesome and English to the marrow of

his bones." Even the British knew, for Stormont wrote to Weymouth, December 27, 1777: "Lee is little trusted and has not the Real Secret,"⁹ while such words as "Insolent," "Grumbling," "Suspicious," "Unfit for negotiation" are sprinkled through the European spy correspondence which mentions Lee. Gerard, the French Minister in Philadelphia, makes the statement in his dispatch No. 22 (September 5, 1778) to Vergennes that Arthur Lee had long been in correspondence with Doctor Berkenhout, who was one of the secretaries of the Carlisle, Eden and Johnstone Peace Commission from England in 1778. The firm support of the Massachusetts delegation in Congress came to Lee in part through the close friendship of his brother, Richard Henry Lee, with Samuel and John Adams, and they were not displeased with the opportunity given them, by Lee's suspicions and hints, to bring about the destruction of "Ticonderoga" Deane.

Vergennes having been long convinced that France should help America, addressed a *memoire* to King Louis XVI,¹⁰ in July, 1777, urging that if America was to be helped then was the time to take action. This *memoire* shows that help for America depended upon Spain's attitude; that it was more a question of European policies than of events in America, which actuated Vergennes. Spain held back and the French King hesitated to move without her. In December, however, after the news of Brandywine and Germantown and before the news of Saratoga reached Paris, Vergennes was able to persuade the King to carry France alone to the aid of America, without waiting for, or depending on Spain. With the approval of the King, he sent his July *memoire* to the French Minister at Madrid, to be delivered to the Spanish Government and the next day, December fourth, the news of Saratoga reached Paris. This news convinced the King that Vergennes was right and this was the value of Saratoga in the French Alliance, but it should not be forgotten that Brandywine and Germantown had decided weight with Vergennes for, though he could not move without the approval of the King, the King would hardly have moved in such a case without the approval of Vergennes; Saratoga without Brandywine and Germantown does not merit the consideration which has been given it.

Washington, while well aware of the existence in the United States of an attitude favorable to an accommodation with Britain, does not appear

to have realized that attitude as connected with the Gates-Conway intrigue and, in precisely the same way did Gates, Conway, Mifflin, Pickering and the other military politicians fail to understand that the support accorded them in Congress was for a far different purpose than the exaltation of their imagined abilities to the high places they coveted. Because of these misunderstood purposes on every side, the Conway Cabal has presented difficulties to the historian, and the fact that it failed has rendered the difficulties greater. Had it succeeded all of its devious twisting paths would have been clearly defined long ago: but with failure its ramifications became more or less inconsequential, except to those who wish to know the truth in the story of George Washington. It seems incredible that Washington could have been the center of such a hideously selfish and unpatriotic coil without knowing more about it than he did, yet it is perfectly in keeping with the high sense of honor in the man that, without any evidence beyond that of the jealous and intriguing dispositions of Gates and the rest, he suspected nothing beyond the boundaries set by their personal ambitions.

Nothing more is needed to show how thoroughly George Washington knew Horatio Gates than Washington's letter to Congress, August 21, 1777, when, believing Howe had gone far to the southward, he spoke of marching the army northward to stop Burgoyne:

as the Northern department has been all along considered separate and in some measure distinct; and there are special Resolves vesting the command in particular persons, in case it should hereafter appear eligible to unite the Two Armies, it may perhaps be necessary that Congress should place the matter upon such a footing as to remove all the scruples or difficulties about the command that could possibly arise on my arrival there. This I request, from a disposition to have harmony, and from my knowing the ill and fatal consequences that have often arisen from such controversies, and not from the most distant apprehension that one would take place, upon such an event. The thing however is possible, and to guard against it can do no injury.

If a letter could make Congress writhe, this letter certainly should have had such an effect. There could be no plainer statement that Major-Gen-

eral Horatio Gates would contest the authority of the Commander-in-Chief, did Washington move the army into the Northern Department, and though Washington has been criticized for his unparalleled meekness with Congress, this letter as good as served notice on that body that General George Washington would not demean himself by entering into a controversy with Gates. The fundamental purpose behind every move of Washington was to gain Independence for America. Congress, the representative body of the people, was to Washington the supreme authority of civil liberty and though it fumbled and interfered, it yet remained the fountain-head of popular power in America. Washington submitted to almost everything where he felt that such submission advanced the cause of liberty; but the one thing he did not and would not submit to was an assault upon his personal honor. The question of command of the Northern Department would have become a question of this kind and he calmly laid the gauge of battle before Congress in this letter of August twenty-first. Fortunately for the country and Congress, the Gates supporters were not then strong enough to carry matters through with a high hand and Congress promptly repudiated any intention of limiting Washington's powers as commander-in-chief.

That Gates and Conway should have met and recognized each other as generals vastly superior in genius to the ignorant American colonials, is not surprising. The self-sufficiency of the ex-British Army officer was easily matched by the self-sufficiency of this professional Irish-French soldier. That the two made common cause and enjoyed their critical backbiting of their American superiors, was but natural. That Gates was interested in pushing Conway, or Conway in pushing Gates, is inconceivable. Conway was for ever scheming for self-advancement and in this he was not alone. The same influences in Congress supported him which supported Gates. The coil, however traced, eventually leads back to the same source. Conway was used by these influences in Congress to weaken and distract the firm-knitted adherence of the army to Washington. His appointment to a major-generalcy over Washington's flatly stated objections was evidence, not of Conway's influence, but of the strength the Massachusetts coalition felt it then possessed. Washington's objections were not personal. Any attempt to explain his management of affairs during the Revolution on a personal basis will result in complete failure, for one of

the reasons why Washington succeeded was his ability to ignore his personal feelings and decide entirely upon the basis of the good of the cause. Precisely to the extent that others were unable to achieve this personal disinterestedness, did the others fail.

Mifflin expected some personal aggrandizement from Washington's fall from power, though it is doubtful if he had outlined it definitely to himself. Pickering, having published a small book on militia tactics, felt himself to be a military genius who was under-appreciated and practically all of his bitter criticism of Washington displays merely the jealous inferiority complex of the small-souled man.

Benjamin Harrison, a delegate to the Continental Congress from Virginia, was certainly in a position to know what was going on and he accused Richard Henry Lee of plotting with Samuel and John Adams against Washington.¹¹ In any analysis of the Conway Cabal, Richard Henry Lee occupies a peculiar position. It was impossible for a man to have been a warm friend of John and Samuel Adams and George Washington at one and the same time, and Lee was certainly a warm friend of the Adamses. The coalition of the Lees with the Adamses began in Philadelphia in 1775 and lasted well through the war. Virginia was necessary to Massachusetts and the Lees seemed to control at least as large a part of the Old Dominion as the Adamses did of the Old Bay State; yet though it is by no means clear that the Lees perceived or understood how the Adamses used them politically, the Adamses could and did help in sustaining the position of Arthur Lee. It is not so necessary to explain the Lees as it is to follow the tortuous trail of the New Englanders for a full understanding of the most important political struggle of the war. Gerard, the French Minister to America, and as keen a diplomat as has ever been in the United States, informed Vergennes (in his dispatch No. 68, March 4, 1779) that after striving carefully to discover the aims and purposes of the New England coalition, which was always secretly as well as openly antagonistic to France, he was convinced that the object of the Adams-Lee combine was the maintenance of John Adams and Arthur Lee reciprocally in power abroad. Samuel Adams, Gerard wrote, with clear understanding, always needed disturbance and controversy to maintain his grip on power, so disturbance and controversy were resorted to whenever defeat of any of his plans seemed likely. Gerard referred to the

Adams-Lee combine as "the party of the opposition" in Congress, and "party of the opposition" is a significant description when the record so clearly demonstrates that all the activities and maneuvers of it were directed against Washington and the French Alliance, the two factors of the Revolution which were the vital pivots in the success of American independence.

De Francy, Beaumarchais's agent in America, had already decided that Richard Henry Lee was a hypocrite. He further reported, in perfect ignorance of what Gerard was writing, that there was a strong party in Congress entirely opposed to everything that could strengthen the Alliance but that happily this group was then scattered. Later he added, with seeming relief, that "The brothers [Richard Henry and Francis Lightfoot Lee] of the Berlin politician [Arthur Lee], who would have upset everything to have kept him in his place, have both quit Congress."¹²

Dr. Benjamin Rush assumed the attitude of the pure republican and professed to fear the great popularity of Washington as a danger to America, but like other over-pure patriots, he could not see the inconsistency of fearing a fancied future despotism more than the actual, present tyranny of the British. Unfortunately too, Doctor Rush (who liked to write anonymous criticism) was the son-in-law of the only known apostate among the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, so that this, taken in connection with the date of his first display of anti-Washington feeling, interferes somewhat with Rush's confident patriotism.

From somewhere in Congress came the story or rumor that Washington intended to resign. This was whispered about as another move of the Cabal to get rid of Washington, so that Massachusetts could again gain control of the army through Gates, who would surely have succeeded him. The story traveled to Boston (strangely enough it does not seem to have reached any of the other states before it arrived at the Massachusetts capital and spread itself abroad from there). The Reverend William Gordon, at Jamaica Plains, promptly wrote Washington asking if this rumor were true. Washington's reply, February 15, 1778, should have put all such notions to rest, but the resignation story was and is still spread abroad, while the denial of it is forgotten or ignored.

I can assure you [wrote Washington] that no person ever heard

me drop an expression that had a tendency to resignation. The same principles that led me to embark in the opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain operate with additional force at this day; nor is it my desire to withdraw my Services while they are considered of importance in the present contest; but to report a design of this kind is among the Arts wch those who are endeavouring to effect a change are practicing to bring it to pass. I have said and I still do say, that there is not an Officer in the United States that would return to the sweets of domestic life with more hearty joy than I should; but I would have this declaration accompanied by these Sentiments, that while the public are satisfied with my endeavours I mean not to shrink in the cause; but the moment her voice, not that of faction, calls upon me to resign, I shall do it with as much pleasure as ever the weary traveller retired to rest.

The Gates-Conway correspondence needs careful study; perhaps much of it was destroyed during those dangerous days in 1778 when the Cabal was sinking. One letter, or what was claimed to be an extract of one, did survive and this shook the army and Congress to their foundations. After the victory at Saratoga, Gates sent his aide, Major James Wilkinson, with dispatches to Congress announcing the event. Wilkinson, than whom few greater scoundrels have ever disgraced the United States Army, took his time in traveling from Albany to York, Pennsylvania, and when he reached Reading, he yielded to the persuasions of Lord Stirling to dine with him. Despite Wilkinson's gibes at Stirling's convivial habits, he did not retain his sobriety as well as his host and, with that ever-present desire of petty natures to claim an importance they never rightfully possess, Wilkinson's alcoholic brain led him to confide to Stirling that he had seen in Gates's file a letter from Conway containing a far from complimentary reference to the Commander-in-Chief. Stirling forwarded the information to Washington and Washington, with the natural reaction of the Virginia gentleman, wrote to Conway a letter that is the perfection of diplomatic correspondence:

Sir, A Letter which I receivd last Night, containd the following paragraph "In a Letter from Genl. Conway to General Gates he says—"Heaven has been determind to save your Country; or a weak General and bad councillors would have ruined it." I am Sir yr. Hble. Servt.

The effect of this laconic epistle was tremendous. Conway rushed to Mifflin, Mifflin sent an express to Gates and Gates, realizing how thin was the ice upon which he skated, developed a bad case of panic. All the military side of the conspiracy developed high nervous tensions which started them jumping at shadows. Wilkinson sober, denied Wilkinson drunk and Mifflin's express to Gates caused that doughty political general to hurry a note to Conway imploring that dazed individual to tell him which letter had been copied. Then Gates made his fatal error. He wrote to Washington, before Washington wrote to him, denying a charge not yet made and attempting to shift an issue, not yet raised, from unsoldierly criticism of the Commander-in-Chief to a question of purloined private letters and the public danger resulting therefrom. In his confusion he fell back on his influence in Congress with a muddled idea of throwing the matter into that body for discussion, from which he trusted the Massachusetts and other delegates might successfully develop support for him against the Commander-in-Chief. Under this conviction he sent his letter to Washington through the President of Congress with the puerile explanation that Congress might combine with Washington in search for the purloiner of Gates's private letters.

Washington sent his answer to this letter from Gates to the President of Congress with the bland apology that as Gates had so acted, Washington could do no less, as some purpose was doubtless to be answered by such a course. His answer to Gates showed that hasty penman the fatal error committed by a too hasty denial. First Gates's aide and now Gates himself had slipped, but in the struggle to achieve an answer, the only way that presented itself as a possible one was the final brazen denial of the existence of the Conway paragraph. Washington answered this impeachment of his intelligence with a blast that swept the ground from under Gates, by pointing out to that devious individual the contradictions of his explanations. The thing was too plain even for Gates to explain away, so he surrendered with as good grace as possible, begging Washington to drop the matter, to which the Commander-in-Chief promptly acceded:

I am as averse to controversy as any Man, and had I not been forced into it, you never would have had occasion to impute to me, even the shadow of a disposition towards it. Your repeatedly and

solemnly disclaiming any offensive views in those matters, which have been the subject of our past correspondence makes me willing to close with the desire, you express, of burying them hereafter in silence, and, as far as future events will permit, oblivion. My temper leads me to peace and harmony with all Men; and it is peculiarly my wish, to avoid any personal feuds or dissensions with those, who are embarked in the same great national interest with myself; as every difference of this kind, must in its consequences be injurious.¹³

Despite this indefensible position into which Gates jockeyed himself, his supporters in Congress attempted to carry things through with a high hand; but such a coil dragged out into the light for all men to see, could obtain no general support and this part of the plan, for New England to regain control of the army, went into the discard.

Washington's understanding of the fiasco is found in his letter to his aide, John Fitzgerald, February 28, 1778:¹⁴

I thank you sincerely for the part you acted at York respecting C—y's Letter and believe with you that Matters have and will turn out very different to what that Party expected. G—s has involved himself in his Letters to me in the most absurd contradictions. M— has brought himself into a scrape he does not know how to get out of with a Gentleman of this State and C—, as you know, is sent upon an expedition which all the world knew and the event has proved was not practicable. In a word I have a good deal of reason to believe that the Machinations of this Junto will recoil upon their own heads and be a means of bringing some matters to light, which by getting me out of the way, some of them thought to conceal.

Wilkinson furnished the last act of this *opera-bouffe* of the conspirators. He challenged Gates, who smoothed him over past the fighting point; then he challenged Stirling, with a proviso. My lord met the proviso good-naturedly and the impetuous fire-eater subsided. But Brigadier-General John Cadwalader was not an *opera-bouffe* man; when he challenged Conway he meant it; met him and shot that unfortunate bungler through the mouth.¹⁵

The Conway Cabal was finished; but the influences that created it, the unnamed sinister activities of which the Cabal was merely an outcrop-

ping, were only scotched. They survived and their next attempt to gain control of the military side of the government was made through the Board of War, the very organization which Washington had advised establishing as an aid and support to the army and himself.

The power of the New England-Virginia coalition was sufficient to make Gates president of the Board of War, and the Canadian expedition, with Lafayette at the head of it, was one of the schemes. This fiasco is too complicated a coil of petty politics to justify analysis here. The purpose was to ruin the French influence, as the coalition saw it, through Lafayette, which would necessarily injure Washington also. The plan was to separate Lafayette from Washington by sending him into Canada in command of an expedition which, whether it succeeded or failed, was full of untold possibilities which could be turned to advantage by the coalition. It was a clever coil and its ghastly failure from the inability of Gates and the Board of War to handle the necessary arrangements of troops, money and supplies, has little value except as a demonstration of the way in which the Revolution would have collapsed had the New England influence succeeded in ousting Washington and putting Gates in control. Conway's reception by Congress on his return from Albany was, he wrote Gates, "not a warm one . . . except Mr. S. Adams, Col. R. H. Lee and a few others who are affected to you but cannot oppose the torrent." Such a statement in June, 1778,¹⁸ when the coil of the Conway Cabal was clear to every one, is not a particularly high recommendation of the individuals named.

This scheme having failed, another attempt was canvassed, which Minister Gerard reported to Vergennes (Dispatch No. 121, September 10, 1779). The scarcity of money, or specie, he reported, threatened the existence of the army and the idea was put forward, carefully and confidentially by Samuel Adams and the Lees, that Washington again be vested with dictatorial powers that he might be able to obtain supplies for the troops and so save the army from disbanding. It was a perfectly sensible move on the surface, but the hope behind it, Gerard believed, was that by seizing the needed supplies Washington would be rendered odious and the army brought into disrepute. But Washington was then using impressment powers without having referred the matter to Congress and he somehow managed, to the disappointment of his enemies, so to handle the business that none of the expected or anticipated results ensued.

A year or so later, Major-General John Sullivan, who resigned from the army after his successful Indian expedition in New York and was elected a delegate to Congress from New Hampshire, wrote to Washington from Philadelphia that he found the old plot against his Commander-in-Chief had been revived and that now it harped upon the danger to America in placing too much confidence in one man; that the scheme was to alarm the people by imaginary evils and to persuade Congress that the military power should be divided into three or four different geographical areas, with a separate commander in each, and each commander to be directly responsible to Congress. The hint was that Washington might set up a tyranny. Greene also sent word that the Cabal was revived and accused Mifflin, whom Cadwalader had tried unsuccessfully to drag to the dueling field, charging him with responsibility for the revival. It is curious how the officers of the Continental Army saw nothing but ambitions of rank and personal jealousy in all these schemes and it is still more curious that the modern historian's attention has been directed for years to these same petty details of rank ambitions, to the entire exclusion of the political maneuvers in Congress, which were the heart of the Conway Cabal.

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CHAPTER XLIX

THE BATTLE OF MONMOUTH AND GENERAL LEE

WHEN Sir Henry Clinton evacuated Philadelphia in the early morning of June 18, 1778, he crossed the Delaware into Jersey and marched by way of Haddonfield and Mount Holly toward Amboy. Washington learned of the British retreat about eleven A.M. and immediately started in pursuit. The Continentals crossed the Delaware at Coryell's Ferry and moved almost due east. To reach Amboy on the route he had selected, Clinton had to march in a northeasterly direction. The two armies gradually approached each other; Washington had the shortest distance to march and the British were encumbered by a huge wagon-train of baggage. The two armies met near Monmouth Court House.

Councils of war, held at Valley Forge and on the march, advised against attacking the British; General Lee was especially emphatic against such action; but as the armies approached each other Washington became more and more convinced that Clinton should be strongly attacked.

In Philadelphia the British had totaled nineteen thousand men; Washington crossed Coryell's Ferry with thirteen thousand. These figures have given mathematical historians an opportunity to juggle Clinton into detaching so many thousand for his baggage train escort (which number does not appear to have been officially reported) that Washington can be credited with an overwhelming superiority of troops. He is therefore charged with neglecting a rare opportunity to demolish Clinton. He is adjudged greatly to blame for not using his cavalry against Clinton's baggage train, by which he could have crippled the British and perhaps defeated them. This criticism, like others, has no solid foundation. The first day the American Army was within striking distance of the British Alexander Hamilton, who was then with the advance-guard, reported to Washington that the enemy were in admirable order; that Clinton's baggage train was well covered by a picked corps of five thousand men, marching as a rear-guard between the baggage and Lafayette's troops.¹

The Continental dragoons had been in winter quarters at Trenton, while the army was at Valley Forge and it does not appear that they were at Monmouth in force. The field return of the Continental Army, June 22, 1778, does not show the presence of dragoons and the recommendations of the council of general officers respecting the cavalry, May 1, 1778,² shows that arm of the service as in a far from satisfactory condition.

It is unfortunate that Major-General Charles Lee and the battle of Monmouth are so closely entwined that the performances of that officer distracts attention from the much more interesting matter of the first battle in which the American Army displayed disciplined steadiness and maneuvered tactically under fire, as a military machine should. Lee, when he found Washington determined on attacking the British, declined command of the advance-guard, only to change his mind and request the assignment after Washington had given it to Lafayette and its force was increased to about five thousand men. Only Lafayette's politeness saved Washington from an awkward situation. The Marquis retired in favor of Lee, who went boldly forward until he was within sight of the British and then his confidence failed him. He hesitated, lost an opportunity which his superior numbers gave him and as the British, reenforced, advanced upon him, withdrew his troops from one position after another, without contesting the ground and fell back upon the main column, advancing under Washington, without giving the Commander-in-Chief notice. These five thousand men rolling back unexpectedly upon Washington's advancing army, could have thrown the entire force into hopeless confusion; but fortunately for America, this did not happen.

Informed that Lee was retreating, Washington galloped forward until he met the returning troops. Hastily he threw two regiments into the path of the advancing British, just as Lee appeared on the scene. The meeting between the two generals has been described in entirely opposite terms by several eye-witnesses; but from these divergent accounts, one or two points are clear. If Washington swore at Lee, no authoritative account of it has survived. The foundation of the swearing story may have been Lee's intemperate letter to Washington after the battle, stating that the Commander-in-Chief used "very singular expressions" in addressing Lee, to which point Washington replied that he was not conscious of having used singular expressions. Blasphemy would have been a singular expression

for Washington to use and it may have been on this theory that the swearing story started. The Commander-in-Chief was highly indignant at Lee's falling back and openly displayed his anger and disappointment at the retreat. Lee's claim that he found no position fit for defense that he did not, at the same time, afford the British a better one for attack, until he reached the place where Washington met him, is not susceptible of verification. It is curious that Lee did not recognize a good defensive position until Washington arrived and issued orders for the ground immediately before him to be defended.

The battle raged from the forenoon until dark of a blistering hot day, and dozens of men in both British and American armies were stricken down by the heat. As soon as the retreat was checked, Washington ordered Lee to hold the ground while he went back to hurry forward the main column. Returning again to the front line he sent Lee and his exhausted troops to Englishtown to rest. Baron von Steuben did valiant service during the afternoon. The troops knew and recognized their drill-master; rallied to his commands under fire with the same regularity they had shown on the drill-ground, and delivered counter-attacks against the British with the steadiness of veterans. Generals Greene, Knox and Wayne deserve a large share in the credit for saving the day, and after the first confusion caused by Lee's bungling, the troops fought doggedly and tenaciously until darkness put an end to the struggle. During the night Sir Henry Clinton stole silently away, leaving his dead and badly wounded on the field, a thing no victorious army does, and the speed with which he marched the distance from Philadelphia to Monmouth should be compared with the speed with which the British covered the remaining miles between Monmouth and New York Bay. Clinton marched thirteen miles between midnight and daybreak, when his absence was discovered and Washington, with another intensely hot day upon him, felt that it was useless to pursue. He turned toward the Hudson and moved by easy stages to White Plains, from whence he wrote that well-known comment upon the war, to Thomas Nelson, of Virginia, (August 20, 1778) that it was not a little pleasing nor:

less wonderful to contemplate that after two years manœuvring and undergoing the strangest vicissitudes that perhaps ever attended any

one contest since the creation, both armies are brought back to the very point they set out from and that which was the offending party in the beginning is now reduced to the use of the spade and pickaxe for defence. The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel who lacks faith and more than wicked that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations.

It is impossible to ignore Major-General Charles Lee in considering the battle of Monmouth; but there has been a great deal of unnecessary discussion of his motives, purposes and intentions, possibly because his military ability has been taken entirely too much for granted by historians. It is not necessary to consider the dishonorable and traitorous actions of the man while he was a prisoner with the British. The important point is: How good a soldier was Charles Lee? The main evidence of his military skill comes from Lee's own statements and such evidence is worthless.³ His military talent in America was not displayed on any occasion, beyond a voice in a few councils of war and the erection of a few fortifications. True, his advice seems to have been valued by Washington; but verbal discussion with a clever eccentric, which Lee certainly was, is one thing and the actual maneuvering of troops on a battle-field is another, as Lee plainly demonstrated at Monmouth. The most reasonable explanation of Lee at Monmouth seems to be: He was opposed to attacking the British; Washington's orders to him, while discretionary, plainly meant that an attack was preferable and desirable; Lee's force was such that he could have overwhelmed the first British detachment he encountered had he acted promptly and with vigor (Lee himself thought he had a victory in his grasp, as the British were only about two thousand while he had five thousand); the retreat and subsequent confusion of his units was due to Lee's bungling. Had Lee been the good soldier he is credited with being, he should have been able to conduct a retreat, which was made by his orders, without throwing his men into confusion, for the Continental Army gave ample evidence that day that it was able to maneuver under trying conditions. So the matter comes down to the point that Lee, disapproving an attack, withdrew his troops, failed to make the withdrawal with military skill and endangered the entire American Army by permitting these disorganized units to fall back without warning, on advancing,

supporting troops. There is certainly no outstanding military ability discernible in this. The aftermath of Monmouth was tragic for Lee, who refused to let well enough alone. He possessed an itching pen to which he fled for solace, and wrote the Commander-in-Chief two such frenzied letters that Washington had no choice but to order him before the court martial Lee impertinently requested. Convicted of disobedience of orders; of misbehavior before the enemy by making an unnecessary and, in some few instances, a disorderly retreat and of disrespect to the Commander-in-Chief, he was sentenced to be suspended from command for twelve months. As to the disobedience of orders, there can be an honest difference of opinion; but Lee certainly misconstrued and misinterpreted the spirit, well understood throughout the whole army, as to attacking the enemy. The other two counts were justified. The sentence seems to have been the result of the extremely conflicting testimony submitted to the court martial. Congress dallied with the proceedings nearly four months, while Lee made himself more disagreeable than ever by his biting tongue and acid pen. Steuben challenged him and Lee explained; Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens, Washington's aide, challenged, met and shot Lee in the side; General Wayne challenged and Lee explained; Lee challenged William Henry Drayton, South Carolina's delegate to Congress, who refused to fight Lee. Before the year of his sentence was up, Lee wrote one of his insane Lee-ish letters of criticism to Congress and was promptly dismissed from the army.

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CHAPTER L

THE FRENCH ALLIANCE—THE RHODE ISLAND FAILURE AND LAFAYETTE'S CANADIAN SCHEME

WHILE the Continental Army was limping on naked bleeding feet, over the frozen road toward the hell of misery awaiting it at Valley Forge, Fate was arranging for its ultimate victory on the other side of the Atlantic.

Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes, was early aware of the fact that the interests of France and America, in revolt against England, were similar and that reciprocal advantages could be developed by proper handling. He had succeeded, after long months of careful diplomatic finesse, in completely isolating Great Britain from the concert of Continental powers. This situation, he well knew, could not be made permanent, but meanwhile, England could be hampered and weakened and her further Continental influence curtailed. The independence of the American states would be one telling blow, for it would not only deprive England of her colonies but add another to her world enemies. The approval of the King obtained, Vergennes was ready to go ahead, regardless of the fact that Spain, though bound to France by the *pacte de famille*, still held back.

The importance accorded the victory of Saratoga in the French Alliance, is merely a legacy of the misunderstood Conway Cabal and to appraise Saratoga properly is but an act of simple justice to George Washington. Vergennes was interested in one thing only and that was the determination of America to persevere in its struggle for independence, and the greatest obstacle to be overridden in that struggle was the little group in Congress which clung so persistently to an accommodation with Great Britain. Vergennes's European policy did not contemplate involving France in a war with another power, if it could be avoided, and he had no intention of coming to the aid of the United States, which meant a war with England, while there was a chance that those states would suddenly

accommodate their difficulties and renew their allegiance to Great Britain. Until the American Revolution progressed to the point that it had a value to France in European politics, the help that France gave it was merely experimental, to see what it might develop. The longer the Revolution lasted the more damage it would do to England, so Vergennes was willing to help it last. That America could not help France in any way in event of a war with Great Britain was quite plain and the absurd instructions given by Congress to its commissioners abroad, to offer or promise to Spain, an expedition of ships and men to conquer Portugal, was a sample of the kind of wisdom that sometimes influenced the management of foreign affairs by Congress. Vergennes was well informed through his agents in England (and Beaumarchais while there, was one of his best) of the strength of the feeling and effort in America to bring about an accommodation and this knowledge made France cautious. The center of America's resistance was General George Washington and the army, and until that particular combination satisfied Vergennes that it could be depended on to fight to the bitter end, there was not the remotest chance of France coming openly to America's aid. Herein lies the true value of the Trenton-Princeton and Brandywine-Germantown campaigns and the more the story of the Revolution is analyzed the plainer becomes the fact that George Washington was the fundamental element of the entire conflict. Every important phase of the Revolution shows Washington the pivotal character around whom events revolved and on whom they depended.

But if the French were informed of what was known about America in England, the British were also well informed of what was going on in France. Though Vergennes guarded his secrets from the English better than England succeeded in guarding hers from Vergennes, the thin spot in the curtain was Edward Bancroft, the Secretary to the American Commissioners, though he was never suspected and his perfidy only came to light years afterward, through the historical researches of Benjamin Franklin Stevens. Through Bancroft, who was one of the cleverest of diplomatic spies, the British Ministry knew practically everything that happened and the only thing that prevented the alliance being known prematurely to England was the way in which Vergennes held Franklin and the other commissioners at a distance until he had perfected his plans. The French Minister knew that there was a leak of information to the British

somewhere as it was information of such a character that it could only come from the commissioners themselves. He unjustly suspected Arthur Lee which accounts for the fact that all information was kept from Lee by the French, making it impossible for the Virginian to accomplish anything of value in a diplomatic way in Europe so long as France dominated the European concert.

The British Minister knew, through Bancroft, that the Treaty of Alliance had been signed, a few days after the fact, which explains the haste with which their peace commissioners, Carlisle, Eden and Johnstone, were dispatched to America. What the British did not know was that Simeon Deane had sailed for the United States with the Treaty itself, which reached the Continental Congress before the British peace commissioners arrived.

The first French aid to reach America after the signing of the Treaty was D'Estaing's fleet, which arrived at the Delaware Capes in less than a month after Howe had sailed and Clinton had marched from Philadelphia, thus demonstrating the wisdom of that part of Clinton's instructions from England, regardless of what might be said of the rest of them. From the Delaware, D'Estaing sailed to New York and hove to off Sandy Hook while American pilots, sent by Washington, tried to puzzle out a safe way to get the heavy French 74's over the bar and into New York Bay. The French line of battle-ships were of deeper draught than the British, so much deeper that the opinion was unanimous that they could not be piloted into the bay. D'Estaing's officers themselves took soundings, which confirmed the reports of the American pilots, and Washington's vision of a joint attack on New York City, by land and sea, faded. The next possibility was to attack the British force at Newport, Rhode Island, and D'Estaing sailed for that place, while Washington detached a part of his force under Lafayette, to reenforce Sullivan, then in command in Rhode Island. The militia forces needed to support the operation did not assemble promptly and D'Estaing landed four thousand men from his fleet to assist the Americans. Sullivan's personal inability to cooperate with the French, the delay of the Rhode Island militia in assembling as ordered, a British naval reenforcement from New York and a terrific storm completely wrecked all chances of victory. The gale scattered the British as well as the French ships, and when D'Estaing reassembled his fleet he

found it so damaged that he sailed to Boston for repairs. Perhaps, had Sullivan acted differently before the gale sprung up, the French Admiral might have found a way to remain; but the damage to his fleet was real and serious and he had made so many concessions to the American General that he was in no mood to make more, so he sailed for Boston leaving the New Hampshire Indian fighter to get out of his difficulties as best he could.¹ Sullivan's best took the tactless, impolitic, impolite and dangerous method of drawing up a remonstrance against D'Estaing's departure, having it signed by the American officers and sending it to D'Estaing at Boston.

Washington's difficulties were heavy enough under all circumstances without having them added to by the impolitic blundering of his officers. Sullivan's remonstrance, signed by Nathanael Greene along with the other generals, is another indication of how swiftly the Revolution would have been wrecked had any other than Washington been at its head. Lafayette, naturally, was enraged and all but challenged Sullivan who made as ungracious an apology to D'Estaing as he could manage. It is not surprising that smooth cooperation between the French and American officers was spoiled by misunderstandings. Washington was the only officer who was able to rise above the provincialisms of the country and meet the sometimes trying situations with calm equanimity. Lafayette expressed the matter in a rather doleful sentence in his letter to Washington anent Sullivan's conduct: "Whenever I quit you," wrote the Marquis, "I meet with some disappointment and misfortune."

Washington strove hard to smooth out this dangerous situation. His letters to D'Estaing, Lafayette and even to Sullivan, are remarkably calm soothing epistles. This last General, now that he began to see the possible consequences of his hasty action, answered Washington that the excitement had subsided and all was friendly again. This self-complacent attitude would be amusing if it were not so pitiful. Only the fact that D'Estaing was a gentleman prevented a tragic ending. The prejudice at Boston was even worse, for without the actual incentive before their eyes which, at least, Sullivan had in Rhode Island, there was rioting between the Bostonians and the French sailors in which one French officer was killed and another badly wounded. The Chevalier de Fleury, of Stony Point fame, wrote back to France that the Bostonians were English toward the French,

but American toward the English.² He did not explain how this inconsistency was possible for, like all the fighting men, both French and American, he had no conception of the chicaneries of the forces controlling the politics of the Bostonians. Doubtless he was correct as to the populace being patriotically American, but he had ocular evidence of its French antipathy in the rioting in 1779, while his belief as to the British antipathy was merely a knowledge of the events of 1775. When D'Estaing had refitted he sailed for the West Indies, in fulfilment of the larger European war plans, in which his American expedition had been only an incident.

Shortly after this worry had lessened, Washington found another and more personal one before him. The Marquis de Lafayette conceived the idea that the Earl of Carlisle, of the British peace commissioners, had insulted the French nation and promptly sent him a challenge. Washington exerted himself to the utmost to dissuade the Marquis from such a step and heaved a sigh of great relief when the Earl declined the challenge on account of his ambassadorial character. Then Lafayette reconceived the scheme of an expedition against Canada, only he would go to France and obtain the force there for an armada to sail up the St. Lawrence while America cooperated overland, from the south. If anything were needed to show how entirely unconnected Lafayette was at all times with the French Government and how little he knew of its purposes and plans, this suggestion would supply it; and the eagerness with which Congress approved the suggestion is further evidence of that body's complete ignorance of European politics. Canada was the last thing Vergennes wanted for France. He was perfectly willing that Great Britain should retain it; in fact he would not have accepted it for France as a free gift, for he saw that Canada could be nothing but a heavy liability. It was precisely that for Great Britain. Therefore let Britain keep it. It helped to weaken her. Finally, and this was the main point, with the hampering influence of British Canada on the north and Spain on the south and west, the American States did not seem to possess many opportunities for swift expansion into a world power.

But Congress, always excited by large distant concepts more than by close needed actualities, approved the grandiloquent scheme of the Marquis and sent it to Washington for his opinion. His reply was a calm anal-

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ysis of the matter which showed its impossibility and, in a further elucidation to President Henry Laurens, Washington acknowledged his fears of a French Canada "if joined with Spain . . . possessed of New Orleans on our right, Canada on our left and seconded by the numerous tribes of Indians in our rear from one extremity to the other, a people so generally friendly to her and whom she knows so well how to conciliate, would, it is much to be apprehended, have it in her power to give law to these States." Here were the old frontier recollections of the French and Indians coming to the fore again.

Lafayette, on his way to Boston to take ship for France, was stricken, on the banks of the Hudson, with an illness that proved nearly fatal. Washington's anxiety was intense. The young Frenchman was one of the individuals for whom he had developed so deep a friendship and affection that, regardless of the political loss to America, Lafayette's death would have been a heavy personal loss to Washington. But the Marquis recovered and returned to France with the plan for a Canada conquest, only to be met by Vergennes's bland refusal to consider such a scheme.

CHAPTER LI

SULLIVAN'S INDIAN EXPEDITION—WAR IN THE SOUTH— SOME PERSONAL TOUCHES

THE year 1779 produced little change in the military situation. The sporadic seacoast raids of the British continued, one expedition going as far south as the Chesapeake Bay and burning Norfolk and Portsmouth in Virginia. Washington had long before advised fortifying the Potomac River for the protection of Alexandria and suggested the erection of batteries on the high ground of Belvoir and Indian Head.¹

But the British were not permitted to inflict these damages with impunity. To balance the account Washington planned two brilliant strokes on the Hudson River which were carried out with perfect success by two dashing officers and which greatly improved the morale of the American troops at the same time that they were distinctly damaging to the British prestige.

Mad Anthony Wayne's capture of Stony Point was the first and Light Horse Harry Lee's capture of Powles Hook was the second. A third and bigger enterprise than either of these was the expedition against the western Indians, which was entrusted to Major-General John Sullivan. The event proved that no mistake was made in selecting him as commander in this instance. The Indian massacres in Wyoming and Cherry Valley were the incentives to this enterprise and as the British in New York City showed little signs of moving in force, and secret intelligence from Canada indicated that the same lethargy existed there, Washington, early in the year, drew up a questionnaire on the Indian country which he sent to Colonels John Cox, William Patterson, Zebulon Butler and William Stewart and Brigadier-General Edward Hand, all Indian fighters and acquainted with the country of the Six Nations through which Sullivan was to march. When these wise frontiersmen had filled in the answers to Washington's questions, he consolidated and analyzed the information in one of the most remarkable documents of the Revolution, remarkable not only

for the complete and exhaustive picture it presents of the country of the Six Nations, in central New York State, but for the penmanship beauty of it and the map which Washington drafted from the information so digested.

The result was an instruction to Sullivan that a non-military man could almost have followed to assured victory. But the difficulties which so often dogged Washington's best laid plans began to intervene and, as usual, they were difficulties which Washington himself could not foresee or guard against, inasmuch as they were the failures of officers to perform their duties in commonplace fashion. Sullivan was held back by the failure of commissaries to furnish him with provisions. He lay at Easton, Pennsylvania, for weeks after the date he was expected to march because of a lack of men and supplies. When he finally moved, he succeeded in scattering the Indian Confederacy, destroyed Indian towns and crops throughout a wide region and broke the power of the Six Nations so completely that those dreaded savages never again were the menace they had been to the western frontier.

Just how much of an idea of the western expansion of the United States was in Washington's mind along with this purpose of freeing the western frontier from the Indian menace, can not be stated with any accuracy. It is hardly possible, however, that his vision of the future of the western country did not have some weight in the decision to send out Sullivan's expedition. The farther west the country could be made safe for the white settler the better in every way for the future. He had already heard of Colonel George Rogers Clark's Kaskaskia expedition and perhaps Sullivan's march was something of an effort to push the northwestern frontier nearer in line to Clark's conquest.

The grasp Washington had to have of the entire war and the relation of all military activities one with the other, from Georgia to Canada, does not seem to be understood by many of those who attempt to envisage his problems. The liberty of America was his thought and not victory for his own army alone. Though he had nothing whatever to do with Clark's expedition he was forced to take it into consideration, for at any moment a British counter-movement from Niagara, Detroit, or Canada might be a result.

When the British so evidently turned their campaign toward the south,

the best Washington could do was to send Major-General Benjamin Lincoln thither with what troops could be spared and instructions to raise additional forces from the militia. This was a good example of Washington's fundamental idea of the Continental Army: that of furnishing a steady trained force about which the militia could rally and on which the militia could lean and depend. Beyond this point he could hardly have planned, for it had been demonstrated to him again and again that it was hopeless to think of whipping any discipline into the militia in the short periods of their service. Washington's first thought and hope was that the colonies could and would raise a strong force of permanent troops. He was convinced in 1776 that Congress could never be brought to this point and from that time on his efforts were to obtain and hold the nucleus of a permanent force and increase the strength of that nucleus at such times as were needed. It did not take the British long to see that this was the system on which Washington was building. They are often on record as being doubtful of the number of militia which Washington could gather; they usually overestimated it and these imaginary totals assumed an importance they did not deserve. Another point was that the professional British soldier made little or no distinction between the Continental trooper and the militia and, as a consequence, having encountered hard fighting from the Continentals, he came to expect something of the same from every American soldier at unexpected times, so that a force of seven to eight thousand meant exactly that number of fighting men to the British commander, even though in reality, five thousand were green undependable troops.

When Washington sent General Lincoln south, Lincoln succeeded in bluffing the British out of Augusta, but they called his bluff and he lost that post and Savannah too. Comte D'Estaing again appeared on the American coast and joined Lincoln in a faulty and fruitless assault upon Savannah, in which they were repulsed and the dashing Pulaski was killed. Again Washington was disappointed; he had supposed that D'Estaing would cooperate with the main army in an attempt on New York City and had made many arrangements toward that end. D'Estaing, however, after the Savannah defeat, sailed away to the West Indies again. Curiously though, Washington's arrangements were reported by British spies to Clinton, who thereupon rapidly consolidated his troops to repel an as-

sault; called in the garrison from Stony Point and brought the troops in Rhode Island back to New York, so that out of Washington's disappointment came the decided advantage of the evacuation of Rhode Island by the British, a thing it had not been possible to accomplish by force of arms for the past three years.

But there were some cheerful moments in the drab year of 1779. At General Knox's quarters at Pluckemin, New Jersey, February eighteenth, the Alliance was again celebrated by the artillery officers, who entertained the Commander-in-Chief and a company of officers and ladies at dinner and exercised their ingenuity in making and setting off fireworks, while the day ended with a ball which lasted all night. General Greene entertained at a dance at his quarters the middle of March, this being the well-known occasion on which Washington and Mrs. Greene danced nearly three hours without once sitting down. This is a note of much greater value as to Washington's physical condition at this time than it is indicative of the many far-fetched interpretations placed upon it. On the anniversary of Independence in this year, Washington pardoned all prisoners then under sentence of death and in October three years after the birth of the nation, the standard uniform of the army was adopted and announced in General Orders (October second) rather naively "as soon as the state of public supplies will permit their being furnished accordingly." By these orders the ground color of the entire army was established as blue, with different facings for different state lines, white, red, blue, scarlet and buff; but only the New York and New Jersey troops had the distinction of wearing the blue and buff that has settled in the public mind as the Continental uniform.

Other personal touches found in 1779 which helped to enliven that otherwise dreary year were Mrs. Bache's letter to her father, Benjamin Franklin then in France, in which she mentions dancing with General Washington at Mrs. Elizabeth Willing Powel's on Franklin's birthday: "I have been several times abroad with the General and Mrs. Washington," Mrs. Bache wrote. "He always inquires after you in the most affectionate manner and speaks of you highly." She must have told Washington at the dance that the day was Franklin's birthday for "he told me it was the anniversary of his marriage [January sixth]; it was just twenty years that night." Washington must have liked Mrs. Bache.

Another touch is found in a letter to Thomas Bishop, the old servant that Washington inherited from General Braddock on the bloody field of Monongahela. In the midst of pressing problems and worries over the lack of money, lack of men and heavy disappointment in the French cooperation, he found time to answer Bishop's plea for a raise of wages. It is a true Washington letter in every sense of the word and one that employers of labor can profitably ponder. It begins bluntly, without social super-scription:

Bishop, I received your letter by Colonel Harrison In answer to it I shall briefly inform you that, as you have been so long a Member of my Family, it is not my intention to let you want while we both live. But with respect to the increasing of your Wages, it is a circumstance that must depend upon the services you render in return. I am very sensible that the high prices of every necessary of Life, are such as not to let you, or any other Man, live for the same nominal Sum you formerly did; and, therefore I leave it to Mr. Washington, to furnish you gratis with such a reasonable quantity of Wool and Flax, as he shall judge sufficient for the Clothing of yourself, Wife and Daughter; to be worked up by yourselves; And besides this, if he thinks your Services entitle you to an increase of Wages, I have no objection to his doing it; but I can neither direct the measure or the Sum, because of my ignorance of the benefit he derives from your Service. This letter goes open under his cover, that he may be apprised of the contents. I thank you for your good wishes, and offer mine in return for yourself, Wife and Child.²

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CHAPTER LII

SUFFERING AT MORRISTOWN—ARRIVAL OF ROCHAMBEAU'S ARMY

WASHINGTON's headquarters at the end of 1779 and the beginning of 1780 were in the house of Mrs. Theodosia Ford, at Morristown, a fine old colonial mansion, but none too large for the use to which it was put. Mrs. Ford, like many patriots, refused to accept pay for the use of her house in which she continued to live, and as a small return Washington had various repairs made and the well cleaned out and relined.¹ The suffering of the army at Morristown was fully as great as it was at Valley Forge and the troops came as near disbanding as they had at the Pennsylvania camp and for the same reasons. Impressment of food supplies and seizure of quarters for the troops, a thing not practised at Valley Forge, could not be avoided at Morristown. It was put into operation by Washington with a circumspection and regard that was the result of his clear understanding and respect for the civil authority and, instead of arousing ill-feeling and resistance, it was submitted to by the inhabitants as a necessary evil for which neither Washington nor the army was blamed. The Commander-in-Chief accomplished this through a circular letter to the New Jersey magistrates and justices of the peace, explaining the situation and begging for their cooperation in the impress; the officers entrusted with the impressment were strictly enjoined to show every possible respect for civil rights, to explain fully the necessity for the seizures and to give certificates for the supplies taken. The judges and justices cooperated in full measure; the impress was handled through them and the certificate given left it optional with the owner to value the supplies himself, or have the value settled in conference with the civil officers. The military kept entirely in the background and the ease and success with which the plan operated was a tribute to Washington's civic sagacity. Had it not been for the supplies thus obtained, the army could not have been held together through the terrific winter which buffeted Morristown that year.

An epidemic of colds at headquarters made life more miserable than usual, and it would seem that Washington's steady nerves were more strained and his irritation more quickly aroused at Morristown than at any previous time. This may have been the result of the physical discomforts to which Mrs. Washington was daily subjected for, with Mrs. Ford's family also living in the house the headquarters were painfully restricted. Then too, for over a month, the Commander-in-Chief had to put up with makeshift meals, which will wear threadbare the patience of a masculine saint, especially as at Morristown it was merely a question of having a log kitchen finished, after the Commander-in-Chief's Guard had built it and not being able to get boards enough to do the job. Quartermaster-General Greene had to stand for a caustic rebuke in this matter for not only Washington but Mrs. Ford was inconvenienced by the lack of the kitchen and, considering himself in the nature of a guest in her house, this was bound to be a daily source of irritation to the Virginian.

The annoyances and inconveniences at Morristown wrung from Washington some unusual verbal sharpness among which was an opinion of Pennsylvania's supineness in supporting the war. Pennsylvania was almost the richest state in the union, yet it had but a thousand or so militia at Morristown and the supplies it sent forward to the starving camp were not sufficient to obtain Washington's thanks. Greene, before whom Washington expressed himself, sent the hint on to President Joseph Reed, but the effect was not particularly noticeable.

The officers endeavored to forget their miseries by rounds of social gaieties and formed a dancing assembly, to which Washington subscribed three hundred dollars.² Catherine Schuyler was at Morristown that winter with General Schuyler and has left us a pleasing picture of the way in which the drab days were lightened. Washington intended, she says, having concerts once a week at his house, but she failed to record the program of even one of these concerts and told us nothing about the musicians.³

There was very little of a serious nature that could be accomplished from Morristown, even though Sir Henry Clinton with nearly ten thousand troops had sailed south on an expedition against Charleston, South Carolina. The ice in the Hudson River and New York Bay packed solid from shore to shore, thick enough to support almost any weight, and the British were so apprehensive of Washington attacking the city that they

marched a detachment of seamen across the ice from their frozen-in ships to strengthen the garrison. But Washington could do nothing. He had weakened his own force by the troops sent south to meet Clinton and the men with him were at a low ebb from physical suffering and lack of food. He did detach about twenty-five hundred under Lord Stirling for a surprise of Staten Island; but the British got word of the move and retreated within their fortifications, where they were too strong to be attacked.

The end of April, 1780, the Marquis de Lafayette returned to America from France, with his high hopes of the Canadian expedition completely dissipated. But though he failed as to this, he accomplished a much greater thing in hastening further French assistance to the United States. He can be credited, in large measure, with the Rochambeau expedition and though he would have gloried in returning at its head, France most wisely entrusted the command to the Comte de Rochambeau, a soldier, gentleman and diplomat who fulfilled his trust to his King and aided America to the utmost of his power. The choice of Rochambeau to command the expedition was a fortunate one for America. His ability as a soldier was fully competent to the situation and he was naturally the kind of man who could understand, appreciate and cooperate with George Washington. It required a Frenchman of broad mind and character to withstand the impact of the demoralizing influences in the Continental Congress, the picture of which was painted for him, in clear colors by Gerard and doubtless much of Rochambeau's handling of a difficult affair was due to the knowledge with which he was fortified by the French Minister at Philadelphia.

The instructions to Rochambeau were that Washington was to be accorded the honors of a marshal of France,⁴ that Lieutenant-General Rochambeau was to serve under him and that rank for rank, the Continental officers were to be considered the seniors of the French.

The names of two Frenchmen who were of tremendous assistance to the French expedition, and who deserve to be well remembered by America for their services to the cause, are John Holker, the French Consul at Philadelphia who acted as the agent for the French fleet and among other things purchased the horses for the French cavalry and artillery, and Ethis de Corny, the Intendant or Commissary to the French Army. Both these

men did their work quietly and well, and it is not too much to say that the success of the allied armies was largely due to their handling of the supply matters for the French. They had the advantage of the use of hard money, French gold and silver; yet it was not always easy to purchase supplies when racial prejudice, religious prejudice and Tory prejudice were encountered throughout the countryside, in weird mixture.

The French expedition arrived at Newport, Rhode Island, early in July, 1780. Washington, informed of its coming by Lafayette, had stationed pilots and those of his aides who could speak French, together with French officers whom he knew and could trust, at various points along the coast from the capes of Delaware to New Hampshire, as it could not be known at what point the expedition would make its landfall.

As it happened, the French sailed into Newport, Rhode Island, announced as the first division of an expedition the second of which was to follow shortly from Brest.⁵ Washington ordered a flock of sheep to be driven in as a present to the French, who had not tasted fresh meat for many weeks. The arrival of the allies sent a wave of rejoicing through the states; but one strange and unforeseen effect immediately appeared in the Continental finances. Comte de Rochambeau paid cash, and French hard money at that, for the supplies he purchased for his troops from the country-folk and this contributed to force the value of the Continental paper dollar still lower and to render the work of the Continental purchasing commissaries harder than ever. Then when Washington sent French gold out for spy services, the coins were sent back with the statement that only English coins were acceptable; for should the spies use French money so soon after the arrival of the allies, it would arouse suspicion. In war every detail must be carefully watched.

Rochambeau's army numbered between five and six thousand troops, but the French fleet (ten or twelve vessels) in which it came did not outnumber the British ships on the American coast and recruits were coming in so slowly to Washington that he was unable to plan or promise any effective cooperation.

Clinton, kept informed of the French, organized a joint land and sea expedition against Rochambeau from New York and moved up Long Island Sound for that purpose. Washington met this by the only maneuver in his power. He advanced toward Kingsbridge with his whole army, in

such a determined manner that Clinton took fright for the safety of New York, disembarked his troops on Long Island and marched them back to the city post-haste. Admiral Arbuthnot, however, sailed on and blockaded the smaller French fleet. This compelled Rochambeau to keep his army in Rhode Island for the protection of Ternay's ships and thus completed the *impasse*. Washington, much too weak to attempt an assault on New York, moved his troops over into Jersey on the west side of the Hudson.

After the arrival of the French, the task of maintaining the army and supporting the war became more difficult. Congress, turning this way and that, in its efforts to raise the needful supplies, hit upon the scheme of having the various states furnish specific quantities of flour, clothing, beef, etc. Former attempts to assess and collect money from the states had largely failed, so the experiment was tried of calling for supplies direct. It met with no better results.

The device of specific supplies was characterized as a folly. "The mode," Washington wrote, "which for want of money has been substituted for supplying the army by assessing a proportion of the productions of the earth, has hitherto been found ineffectual, has frequently exposed the army to the most calamitous distress, and from its novelty and incompatibility with ancient habits, is regarded by the people as burthensome and oppressive."⁸

Badly needed arms and ammunition, expected from France, did not arrive, owing to Arthur Lee's quarrelsome and suspicious interference with Commodore John Paul Jones. Lee supported, if he did not instigate, Captain Pierre Landais to claim command of the American frigate *Alliance*, and with him sailed off to America leaving the larger part of the badly needed stores on the dock at L'Orient. This inexplicable action (Landais developed insanity on the voyage to America), like many others credited to Lee, not only embarrassed Washington, but disgusted Vergennes and was something of a factor in lessening the flow of war supplies to America.

Comte de Rochambeau's position at Rhode Island was irksome to him in the extreme and he felt that an exchange of views with the American General would be productive of action. Washington held off for some time; a delay which is to be ascribed principally to a feeling that a conference through interpreters (as he could not speak or understand

French) would be unsatisfactory and, perhaps, productive of misunderstandings. He finally agreed and Hartford, Connecticut, was selected as the place of meeting.

The main proposal of Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay was an operation against New York; but immediately the poverty of America came into view. These French professional soldiers were quite sure that it would require, under one possible plan, thirty thousand men and under another twenty-four thousand, but even counting upon Rochambeau's army, such a force was not at Washington's command. The expected arrival of Admiral de Guichen with the second French division, by October might make an attack on New York feasible but, if he came later, then it was agreed the combined armies of Washington and Rochambeau should undertake a move against the British forces in the south.

CHAPTER LIII

ARNOLD'S TREASON

WHILE Washington was at Hartford discussing possible plans of campaign with the French, "treason of the blackest dye" was brewing on the Hudson River. Major-General Benedict Arnold was arranging to throw West Point into the hands of the British; but the story for all its colorful excitement and for all that some interesting factors are still undeveloped, can not properly be treated here.

André was captured; Arnold escaped. Washington, arriving at the Robinson House, from Hartford, shortly after Arnold had fled, was told, as the traitor had ordered before he left the house on his mad dash for safety, that Arnold had been called over to West Point. After breakfasting he followed Arnold, as he supposed, across the river. There he was surprised to find Arnold had not arrived. About two hours later Washington returned to the Robinson House to be handed Colonel Jameson's note and the packet of papers found on André. The shock was overwhelming; but the need of action was plain. The day Arnold fled to the *Vulture* Washington wrote and dispatched eight urgent orders to officers nearest West Point to march their troops at once to that post, in anticipation of an assault from the British, even though the plot had gone awry.

But Clinton had no intention of attempting West Point. His sole idea was to save André, who frankly admitted his identity and wrote out a statement of his actions from the time he left the *Vulture* to the moment of his capture.

Washington ordered a board of general officers to examine André and report, and this board, no member of which was below the rank of brigadier-general, and whose proceedings were directed by the Judge Advocate General of the Continental Army, reported unanimously that André was a spy and ought to suffer death. André hoped that his not having changed his uniform until ordered to do so by Arnold, would save him; but it was not possible to save him by any construction of the rules of war

of the day. Criticism of Washington's conduct in the case is founded, as usual, upon misconception or ignorance. André was either a spy or he was not a spy and until it is proved that he was not a spy all displays of a broad charity superior to Washington's are absurd posturings. André would not have been executed had not the board of general officers judged him a spy. If, after this, the method of his execution had been changed in the slightest, the vociferous claim would have been made at once by the British that Washington and the Americans admitted he was not a spy by the manner of his death, and therefore were guilty of an unjust execution.

Washington set the date of the execution for the day after the board reported; but when Clinton in desperation sent General Robertson, Lieutenant-Governor Elliott and Chief Justice Smith to the lines to plead the case, the time was postponed twenty-four hours to hear what the British had to say. General Greene met the British emissaries; but the interview came to naught. Robertson afterward stated that Greene suggested the surrender of Arnold in return for André, and there is little doubt that Greene's suggestion was made in perfect good faith and that Washington would have traded the British Adjutant-General for the American traitor, but this, of course, could not be done. André was executed. Washington disposed of Arnold in a letter to Colonel John Laurens: "I am mistaken if, at *this* time, Arnold is undergoing the torment of a mental Hell.¹ He wants feeling. From some traits of his character, which have lately come to my knowledge, he seems to have been so hackneyed in villainy, and so lost to all sense of honor and shame, that, while his faculties will enable him to continue his sordid pursuits, there will be no time for remorse."²

This was quite close to the fact. The shock to Washington was great. Arnold was one of the very few instances in which Washington completely misjudged a man with whom he had had personal contact. A feeling of personal betrayal added to Washington's burning desire to get his hands on Arnold. It was this that gained his approval of Light Horse Harry Lee's scheme to kidnap the traitor. Sergeant-Major John Champe, of Lee's Legion and a Virginian, undertook the enterprise, and his story, part of which is to be found in the Washington manuscripts, is a thrilling episode. It failed and Arnold became still more despised because of his raids at the head of British expeditions against his native state of Connecticut

and in Virginia. Mrs. Arnold was paid three hundred and fifty pounds for her services in the Arnold plot,³ so that the belief so freely expressed at the time, that she was entirely innocent of knowledge of Arnold's perfidy, is only evidence of how easy it is for contemporaries to be mistaken as to events enacted before their eyes.

The French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Comte de Vergennes, was informed of the Arnold treason by Lafayette. His comment shows that his grasp of American affairs was competent and complete. He was certain that Arnold's treason was too enormous a crime to have many imitators. It was the motives on which Arnold acted that Vergennes dreaded as a possible danger to the French alliance, for they could easily flourish, he felt sure, in a country where jealousy was somehow the essence of government,⁴ and John Adams's homily on the natural love of first place among men bears out this accuracy of judgment on the part of the French statesman.

Arnold immediately set himself to the task of developing that jealousy through the surest means, the prejudice of religion. He published a handbill calling upon all men who loved their country to act as he had done, and one of his principal arguments of persuasion was that the officers and soldiers of the Continental Army "who have the real interest of their country at heart and are determined to be no longer the tools and dupes of Congress or of France" should "share in the glory of rescuing our native country from the grasping hand of France." With resounding phrases Arnold shouted at them:

What security remains to you even for the enjoyment of the consolations of that religion for which your fathers braved the ocean, the heathen, and the wilderness? Do you know that the eye which guides this pen, lately saw your mean and profligate Congress at Mass for the soul of a Roman Catholic in purgatory, and participating in the rites of a church, against whose antichristian corruptions your pious ancestors would have witnessed with their blood.

Such presentations certainly prove the existence of a state of public mind which could understand the appeal, no matter what the reaction to it, and Elbridge Gerry's letter of May 26, 1778, shows the degree to which the religious prejudice occupied the minds of the "party of the opposi-

tion," for Gerry, though not so bitter an antagonist as Adams and Lovell, can yet be definitely placed in opposition to the French alliance. "What a miraculous change in the political world!" he wrote, "the Ministry of England advocates for despotism, and endeavouring to enslave those who might have remained loyal subjects of the King. The government of France an advocate for liberty, espousing the cause of protestants and risking a war to secure their independence."⁵ Gerry, like others who made such a point of their cause as a Protestant one, would never have believed that the religious prejudice so uppermost in his own narrow skull was not given a thought by Vergennes or the French King. It is pleasant to record that no known desertions can be traced to Arnold's Appeal. Treason was a worse offense than popery in 1780!

CHAPTER LIV

MORE PERSONAL MATTERS—THE RECAPTURE OF NEW YORK—WASHINGTON'S VIEW OF CONDITIONS

THE Marquis de Chastellux visited headquarters in 1780 and his description of the dinner he ate there with Washington is a cherished one. There were eight or more dishes of meat and poultry, with vegetables, and the second course consisted of pies and puddings. After this was consumed, the cloth was removed and quantities of apples and hickory nuts were served, with claret and Madeira wine to enliven the board. If de Chastellux's dinner experience was typical of the manner of living at a stationary camp headquarters, the principal meal of the day was a leisurely one and so much time was consumed over the nuts and wine that little more than an hour intervened between the end of the dinner and what was called supper. For this third meal there were three or four light dishes, fruit and a great many nuts, topped off with claret and Madeira. De Chastellux called this last meal a "supper or conversation," which lasted from nine until eleven. The discourse was free and "always agreeable," which is a warming note of the good fellowship that prevailed in Washington's presence among those whom he regarded as friends. The tribute paid by the French Marquis to Washington's horsemanship is even more valuable than that of Captain George Mercer's in colonial days. Washington, de Chastellux said, broke his own horses, by which he meant that Washington gaited them. "He is a very excellent and bold horseman, leaping the highest fences and going extremely quick, without standing upon his stirrups, bearing on the bridle or letting his horse run wild." It is quite satisfactory to know that Washington rode with the full length stirrup, the American cavalry seat; and the description of his bridle touch is more than satisfying. But we owe de Chastellux the greatest human thanks for his statement that "This is the sixth year that he [Washington] has commanded the army, and that he has obeyed the Congress; more need not be said, especially in America, where they know how to appreciate all the

merit contained in this simple fact." This thumbnail sketch of George Washington, the Revolutionary War, Congress and the American people, has never been excelled.

The loss of New York City in 1776 had been a blow to Washington. Regardless of the surrounding circumstances, regardless of the plain fact, which he well appreciated, that he could not hold it by any means against the combined army and navy of Britain, he seems to have taken its loss more closely to heart than is realized. Its recapture was a project dear to him. It might almost be hazarded that in this project alone Washington gave rein to a personal ambition. The soldier in him felt the need of wiping out what seemed a stigma. Boston had been wrested from the enemy; Philadelphia had been abandoned by the British, but Washington had been driven from New York, almost at the point of the bayonet, and his desire to drive the British from it, in turn, was an uppermost, if unexpressed thought in his mind at all times. That vein of romance in Washington's makeup held also the element of poetic fancy and poetic justice, and when the French Alliance became a fact, Washington's first thought of a cooperative enterprise was one against New York City. The tenacity with which he clung to this idea shows how firmly the capture of New York was fixed in his consciousness. After 1778 it was plain to him that a major defeat of the British anywhere would bring the war to an end and for most of the time after that year the main army of the British was the garrison of New York City.

The first great disappointment was D'Estaing's inability to get his ships over the Sandy Hook bar; the second was the failure of the states to exert themselves in raising troops and furnishing supplies sufficient to make cooperation with the French effective. Instead of inciting the people to greater efforts, the coming of the French had the opposite effect and the country relapsed into a lethargy worse than before. Washington voiced his deep disgust to Cadwalader: "We have been," he wrote, "half of our time without provisions and likely to continue so"; a familiar complaint, but the more inexcusable now, after five years of war, than in the beginning. The finish of this letter was even more depressing:

We have no magazines, no money to form them; and in a little time we shall have no men. . . . We have lived upon expedients till

we can live no longer . . . the history of the War is a history of false hopes and temporary devices, instead of system and economy. . . . Our case is not desperate, if virtue exists in the people and there is wisdom among our rulers. But to suppose that this great Revolution can be accomplished by a temporary army, will be subsisted by State supplies, and that taxation alone is adequate to our wants, is, in my opinion absurd.¹

His scorn for the idea that an annual army, or any army raised for an occasion could be equal to the need, was great. The method was ten times more expensive than a permanent army and ten times less effective.

Experience and the nature of things have proven that the Army, if it is to depend on the States for supplies must disband or starve and taxation alone (especially at this late hour) cannot furnish the means to carry on the war. Is it not time then to retract from error and benefit by experience? Or do we want further proof of the ruinous system we have pertinaciously adhered to?

To have a clear picture of Washington, of his difficulties, decisions and efforts it is necessary always to be able to see at the same time, the Continental Congress in the background and notice the effect of that body's actions and non-actions upon Washington's endeavors. To obtain a satisfactory understanding of George Washington's part in the American Revolution the man and Congress should never be studied separately. Washington's thought and effort was the army, for the army was the backbone of the Revolution. In his concept of American democracy, the civil power came first always and Congress was the national civil power. But close as was his attention to the army and habituated as he was to making the military subservient to the civil, his knowledge of humanity and his keen judgment of men and motives, made him a merciless critic of Congress, though never a disrespectful one. Summoned to Congress for a conference in December, 1780, he wrote to Benjamin Harrison, December eighteenth, from Philadelphia, that the Congress was then composed of unusually mediocre men and Washington put his finger on the weak spot with uncanny exactness.

The States separately, are too much engaged in their local concerns and have too many of their ablest Men withdrawn from the

general Council for the good of the common weal. In a word I think our political System may be compared to the mechanism of a Clock, and that our conduct should derive a lesson from it, for it answers no good purpose to keep the smaller wheels in order, if the greater one, which is the support and prime mover of the whole is neglected.

There was no man in America during the Revolution, who felt, thought and acted for the United States as a nation, as did George Washington. He was the only man who never allowed any local pride, prejudice or personal ambition to interfere with this national idea, and Washington's ambition was for the development of a nation in which George Washington's position was unthought of beyond the point of living a free and independent citizen at Mount Vernon.

In this letter to Harrison, Washington added, "I have no resentments," which was a big thing to be able to say, when the contemptible insults hurled at him by Congress, during the Conway Cabal, had but so recently ceased. Had Washington held the cause of the nation less deeply at heart, he would have reacted differently to many things he disregarded. Now and then we glimpse the personal feeling beneath his calm, but by the year 1779 he had passed beyond everything except the emotional relief of writing the unvarnished truth wherever there seemed a chance of such truth-telling benefiting the struggle for liberty.

He spoke bitterly of expensive balls, concerts and suppers being given in Philadelphia, while officers were resigning from the army in droves because they could not live upon their small and depreciated pay. Those who stayed in the service were slowly sinking into beggary and want. He was "afraid even to think" of the result of the "general laxity of public virtue." The British, he thought, remained in America because of two things: "and these balance so equally in my mind, that I scarce know which of the two preponderates. The one is, that they are waiting the ultimate determination of Parliament; the other that of our distresses; by which I know the Commissioners went home not a little buoyed up; and sorry I am to add, not without cause."

This analysis of the situation was as accurate as could be made from America. Britain was now engaged in a real war in Europe with every nation on the continent either aligned against her, or a complacent neu-

tral, through Vergennes's skilful diplomacy. The rebellion of a few colonies in America, three thousand miles away, was becoming decidedly a minor matter. This was what Washington meant by "waiting the ultimate determination of Parliament." With the now rapidly mounting war expenses and the rapidly growing protests of merchants and manufacturers against the American war, Parliament might rightly be expected to hesitate over declaring for a continuance of hostilities in America. But British pride and kingly stubbornness would cause the Ministry to hang on as long as possible, on the chance of America's being unable to continue her resistance. In such event Britain had New York, the principal northern American seaport and Charleston the principal southern one, and the future would hold promise of political manipulation advantageous to England. That the British peace commissioners, having failed in their main purpose, would report roseately on every condition looking to an ultimate victory was but Washington's recognition of human nature.

CHAPTER LV

HIS MOTHER'S PENSION—THE BREAK WITH ALEXANDER HAMILTON

THE year 1781 brought Washington some personal trouble which scarred him deeply. His mother, Mary Washington, developed an unjustifiable fear of poverty in her old age and the obsession was so strong that she became indifferent to the means by which she could obtain the aid she imagined she needed. An officious burgess fostered a movement in the Virginia Legislature to grant her a pension. Benjamin Harrison informed Washington of this and the General answered at once that all of her children "would feel much hurt at having our mother a pensioner, while we had the means of supporting her, but, in fact, she has an ample income of her own."¹

Washington had purchased a house and garden and lots in Fredericksburg for his mother, a year or two before the outbreak of the war, at her own request, so that she might be near her daughter, Betty, at Kenmore. He rented his mother's plantation from her and told Harrison, rather plaintively, that he had never succeeded in making the profit from this equal the rent. The Legislature dropped the matter.

Another trouble was Alexander Hamilton, that young man of great ambition. By 1781 he had become convinced that his post as aide to the Commander-in-Chief could not bring him as much glory and advancement as was the just due of Alexander Hamilton. He was not solely content to give his best services to his country, he wished those services to be given in such a way as to bring honor and credit to himself and he saw that in being close to General Washington he was so outshone that there was little chance of his acquiring the position and power for which he yearned. The break, which occurred in the early part of 1781, resolves itself into a picture of an impatient, able and conceited youth gradually getting upon the nerves of a war-worn middle-aged man, harassed with heavy responsibilities and difficulties. Hamilton's self-conceit first impressed

Washington as humorous; after a time it became boring, then annoying, and finally, after a period of irritation, as this annoyance began to interfere with the routine of business at headquarters, Washington's self-control snapped. The only story of the occasion is Hamilton's, which he sent to his father-in-law, General Schuyler. This was a narrative which Hamilton had reason to dress in as favorable colors for himself as he could, and Schuyler's strictly neutral regret is evidence as much of his knowledge of the character of his son-in-law as of his regard for Washington. Hamilton also suggested and obtained from Washington an agreement not to divulge the break and while this agreement was strictly kept by Washington, it was broken by Hamilton in describing the matter both to Schuyler and Lafayette.

Hamilton's letter to his father-in-law, indeed, carries on its surface an air of rectitude so conscious that it is difficult to grant it entire credence. The incident amounted only to this, according to Hamilton. As Washington and Hamilton passed each other on a stairway, the Commander-in-Chief said he wanted a word with Hamilton, who replied he would be with him in a moment and continued on down-stairs to give a commissary order to Tench Tilghman, which Hamilton says was urgent. On his way back to Washington, Hamilton encountered Lafayette and they "conversed together about a minute on a matter of business." Hamilton claimed he tried to get away and did leave the Marquis abruptly, only to meet Washington waiting at the head of the stairs, who said "in an angry tone" that Hamilton had kept him waiting ten minutes. "I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect." "I replied," wrote Hamilton, "I am not conscious of it, sir; but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part." "Very well, sir," replied Washington, "if it be your choice."

There are too many Hamiltonian points about this narrative to permit it to pass unquestioned, though Hamilton ends it by expressing the belief that his delay, which gave so much umbrage, did not last two minutes.

Washington conquered his momentary irritation and sent Tilghman to Hamilton asking him to reconsider his resignation. This was the Washington that won the Revolution. Hamilton was valuable to him and, to judge from after events, Hamilton despite his conceit was well liked. But youth will not be denied and Hamilton declined to retract, though he did have the grace to remain at headquarters and assist as well as ever until

his leaving would not so seriously embarrass the Commander-in-Chief. He accompanied Washington to Providence, Rhode Island, and assisted in the conference which there took place between the French commander and Washington as to the campaign.

After leaving headquarters, Hamilton wrote to Washington, asking for a commission in the line, commensurate of course with Hamilton's idea of Hamilton's transcendent abilities. This application clearly explains the break with Washington. As an aide, Hamilton had seen many difficulties caused by the real or fancied unjust promotions and appointments which interfered with rank rights, and his idea that Washington could or would deliberately create such another trouble, was an example of young Hamilton's exalted opinion of himself. Washington's reply pointed out the obstacles to granting Hamilton's wish and he ended his letter with the remark: "My principal concern arises from an apprehension, that you will impute my refusal of your request to other motives, than those I have expressed; but I beg you to be assured that I am only influenced by the reasons which I have mentioned." This frank and friendly statement unconsciously analyzes Hamilton. The later firm friendship between the two men when Hamilton had acquired the greater understanding and steady judgment that comes with age shows that the older, wiser man understood the younger, fiery conceited one; but, in 1781, the younger had still to grow to a point where he could understand the elder. When he reached that point, he found in Washington a firm friend throughout the rest of his life.

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CHAPTER LVI

TRADE WITH THE ENEMY—LAURENS'S MISSION TO FRANCE

BEFORE the 1781 campaign opened, conditions became deplorable. There were no magazines of stores available, there were no reserves of military supplies, the army was barely recruited beyond a tenth of its required strength, and Washington saw little hope of doing more than acting on the defensive,¹ even though a French Army was in America and a small French squadron was in Rhode Island's harbors. It was galling to the American General, who writhed in spirit at the poor picture his country would present in the eyes of Europe. All this was the result of state jealousies, delays and ill-timed compliances arising from distrust and the seeming fear of each state that it might do more than a sister state.²

But while the American Army was nearly desperate for food and supplies, a clandestine trade with the enemy was flourishing. Washington wrote that "the traffic with New York is immense. Individual states will not make it a felony lest, (among other reasons) it should not become general."³ That is, if one state made it a felony where another did not, a commercial advantage lay with the state that did not.

It is little wonder that Washington at times lost his temper. That some of the states would not even attempt to prevent trading with the enemy, because of the advantages to be reaped by others which would not pass similar restraining acts, was a strange inversion of patriotism. Washington wished the death penalty as the only means of stopping specie and provisions from going to the enemy for goods; but Congress he knew was impotent until such power was granted it by the states. His own hands were tied as completely as those of Congress though when he caught a civilian at the nefarious practise, he had him court-martialed and sentenced to death. This was as far as he dared go. He would then postpone the execution several times until a holiday like the Fourth of July, or some other celebration, afforded the opportunity of avoiding civil compli-

cations by a blanket pardoning of all prisoners under sentence of death, as a part of the holiday celebration.

When Robert Morris became superintendent of finance, he placed the supply service upon a contract basis and the system worked for a time better than any of the former methods. Then difficulties arose, disputes started and the contractors found loopholes in the contracts which they took advantage of at once by scrimping and cutting corners to increase their profits. Such a small matter as the kidneys and kidney fat of the beef issue became a difficulty and irritation of considerable size. The contractors stripped the beef issue of these, and the troops felt that they were being mulcted out of a choice portion of their ration. Their protest was emphatic and the matter was carried to Morris for a decision. There was substitution, withholding of quantities, rows over the whisky ration and objections of officers to permitting the contractors to examine the troop returns, on the ground that through such a practise the strength of the army and of the detached posts would be known to too many people and could thus easily get to the knowledge of the enemy. As usual, as soon as a problem became difficult of solution it was handed over to Washington. The contract system of feeding the army failed because of a very human factor of human greed for increased profits. Then the contractors began issuing rations to regiments in bulk and the result was most unfortunate for, as Washington wrote to Robert Morris, May 17, 1782,

It cannot be expected that an Army which has suffered every species of hardship and distress, that could arise from want of pay, deficiencies in their rations, and (till now) want of Cloathing, will submit contentedly to a measure which is not warranted by the Usage and customs of any other Army merely because it is convenient and beneficial to the Contractors.

Washington's method of straightening out the tangle was to appoint commissioners to examine into the contract and find a way out that would be fair to both sides. The supineness of the states had already drawn from him a rather bitter remark to Benjamin Harrison.⁴ "If the States *will* not, or *cannot* provide me with the means; it is in vain for them to look to me for the end."

Congress was still looking abroad for the means and had sent young John Laurens to France, toward the end of 1780, to plead anew with the French Court the urgent need of the states for immediate aid. Laurens was the son of Henry Laurens, President of Congress, but, more than that he was then an aide to Washington.

The politics behind this appointment, for there was more than a considerable quantity of that noxious growth woven through the unquestioned need of help, are difficult to untangle without getting too far away from the story of George Washington. Benjamin Franklin was still at Versailles and still capable, though Congress professed to believe that old age had rendered him less competent and was willing to insult the old patriot because of some cheap domestic politics; yet it was Franklin who saved the Laurens mission from ghastly failure. Washington's sole interest in the matter was to obtain aid from the French and as Congress instructed Laurens to consult with the Commander-in-Chief before sailing, Washington drew up a series of instructions in eleven plain spoken paragraphs which later formed the basis and principal part of the memorial Laurens presented to Vergennes. Washington stated that the efforts America made to carry on the war exceeded her natural abilities and by degrees brought on a crisis which made immediate and effective help vital to the country's safety. Its wealth was unequal to the strain upon its credit caused by the war and a paper currency. The method of "Specific Supplies" from the States, "from its novelty and incompatibility with ancient habits" failed, through being burdensome and oppressive, the patience of the army was nearly exhausted and he pictured the American mind with absolute exactness as that of "a commercial and free people, little accustomed to heavy burthens, pressed by impositions of a new and odious kind may not make proper allowance for the necessity of the conjuncture and may imagine they have only exchanged one tyranny for another." The three great needs he stated to be, money, a decided allied effort and a French naval superiority on the American coast. The point of a naval superiority had been stressed before by Washington and his continued urging of it shows his breadth and grasp of war strategy. He pleaded for a French reenforcement of fifteen thousand troops and paid Rochambeau's army the fine compliment of having gained the respect and confidence of the American people, while their perfect discipline had already been of great

value in improving the morale and conduct of the American troops. Washington was sure that no nation was more capable of paying its debts than the United States, so that its national obligations were safe. The people, though discontented, were discontented "with the feeble and oppressive mode of conducting the war, not with the war itself." This was a complete and accurate presentation of the national situation, which few men could have given and given so tactfully, and three months later (April ninth) Washington wrote to Laurens, then in Paris, that "if France delays a timely and powerful aid in this critical posture of our affairs, it will avail us nothing should she attempt it hereafter." This was Washington's honest opinion and, fortunately for America, Vergennes valued Washington's opinion as the one trustworthy source of information. Truth was the only dependable thing and George Washington's belief in truth and honesty was one of the big principles in his life. Conrad Alexandre Gerard, French Minister to the United States, was well convinced of the unreliability of Congress and of many of the men who composed it; but he became completely convinced of the absolute reliability of George Washington. His dispatches to Comte Vergennes, repeated again and again that General Washington was the one dependable force of the Revolution. In the many interviews he sought with the American General, the keen French diplomat searched and probed the mind and soul of George Washington until he was sure that here was the man France could tie to; that such a thing as an accommodation with Great Britain would never be sanctioned by this man and that as George Washington went, so went the army. It was this belief in Washington which Gerard succeeded in transferring to Vergennes which, more than anything else, overcame the doubts of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs as to America's stability. In contrast with his experience with members of Congress and other officials of the government, Gerard found Washington frank, open and truthful. The American General knew only too well the desperate situation of his country and saw in Gerard an agent through whom assistance was possible. He saw too that to obtain that assistance, the real facts must be divulged and the American gentleman, recognizing the gentleman in the French diplomat, laid his cards face upward on the table. It was, in turn, the French gentleman's recognition of Washington's character which was the deciding factor. Congress was shifting, unstable, with factions raging

at one another for petty local advantages to the wreck of national affairs. Washington was stable, solid, immovable from the path of national independence. It is not going too far to state that had George Washington been other than he was, had he been indecisive or temporizing, the French Alliance would not have developed. It is not to be wondered at that the loan of six million livres, a part of which Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens succeeded in hastening to America, was put at the disposal of General Washington by the French. Congress became irate when this little fact became known and the Chevalier de la Luzerne, who had succeeded Gerard as minister to America, had some difficulty in soothing the ruffled Congressional dignity, which shrieked again in patriotic horror at the specter of a military tyrant which this action seemed to portend! Washington made the mollifying of Congress easier by seconding Luzerne's efforts in every way, and the amusing aspect of the matter lay in the fact that, at almost any time after 1776, Congress could not have prevented Washington from sweeping it aside and becoming the tyrant with which Congress so needlessly affrighted itself.

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CHAPTER LVII

THE WETHERSFIELD CONFERENCE—THE MOVE AGAINST NEW YORK—THE MARCH ON YORKTOWN

IN MAY Rochambeau requested another conference with Washington, and Wethersfield, Connecticut, was fixed upon for the place of meeting. At this conference Washington again revealed how deeply the capture of New York City engaged his thoughts. The French General was for an expedition to Virginia, and perhaps a natural leaning toward a distinctively French victory by aiding Lafayette, then in that state, might have been a factor in Rochambeau's reasoning. To the professional soldier, the capture of New York by a regular siege did not appear any too feasible and it should be remembered that at the time of the Wethersfield conference (May twenty-third) Cornwallis had not then fortified Yorktown but was still maneuvering in the open field against Lafayette. This situation was completely altered the moment the British started to intrench on the York River. But the Wethersfield conference settled the plan of campaign for 1781 as a joint operation against New York City. Washington at once sent a circular letter to the states, calling for troops and supplies, but after waiting two months with practically no response, it was plain that he was to be bitterly disappointed again. The French Army marched from Rhode Island to the North River without so much as stealing an apple or damaging a fence on the way, and another conference was held between Washington and Rochambeau at Dobbs' Ferry, July nineteenth. The Wethersfield plan of an operation against New York was confirmed, though both generals knew that their combined forces were inadequate for the enterprise. Nevertheless, Washington's insistence upon an attempt had an unexpected and positive value to the outcome of the war. The British captured the mailpouch containing Washington's, Rochambeau's and Barras's letters regarding the Wethersfield conference and the decision to give over the southern move in favor of an attack on New York. Had these letters been written for the purpose of falling into the hands of the British, they could not have accomplished their object better. Sir

Henry Clinton was so completely convinced of the necessity of being prepared for an attack that he was blinded to every other possibility. Every move made by Washington and the French from that time on was, in Clinton's eyes, a move against New York. The result was that after the Chesapeake became the destination of the allied armies, all the moves to deceive Clinton were so perfectly successful that Sir Henry did not wake to the fact that the Americans were marching south until September first; even then he felt sure Cornwallis was in no danger from which the fleets of Admirals Hood and Graves could not rescue him.

The American plan of southern action, Washington notes in his diary, July twentieth, as the alternative if, after all efforts, it should be found when De Grasse's fleet arrived from the West Indies, that enough men and supplies had not been collected for the New York plan, then a joint operation for the relief of the southern states would be undertaken. Rochambeau, while perfectly willing to cooperate with Washington against New York (his instructions from the King bound him to act under Washington's orders), could not give up his hope of a Virginia campaign to assist Lafayette. He wrote at once, after the Wethersfield conference, to De Grasse, informing the Admiral that the result of the conference was the New York operation, but he reminded De Grasse of D'Estaing's failure to get his ships across the bar at Sandy Hook and spoke suggestively of the Virginia idea. That this letter, sent by a fast frigate, had an influence upon De Grasse can not be doubted; but the French Admiral's engagements of cooperation with the Spaniards in the West Indies, in October, were probably the deciding factor in his declining to sail farther north than the Chesapeake. It should be remembered that, so far as the French were concerned, the war in the American area was a comparatively minor part of the big European struggle in which they were then engaged. Although the Treaty of Alliance bound the United States not to make peace separately with Great Britain (which proviso was a direct consequence of the existence of the coalition in Congress which seemed willing to accept an accommodation), it was to the European and West Indian areas that France gave her main attention; only after Yorktown did it become measurably clear to the European mind that peace between the United States and Great Britain was almost bound to mean peace between Great Britain and France.

Washington's spies reported to him the positions and strength of the British in and around New York. The first week in July, he ordered General Lincoln forward to cooperate with the Duc de Lauzun's French cavalry, then coming westward through Connecticut, in an attempt to cut off Delancey's corps. But distances and marches were miscalculated, as they so often had been, and Lauzun did not reach his objective in time.

Washington marched the main body of Continentals down from Peekskill to support this cooperation and to improve any advantage which might develop from it, but the Hessian Yagers attacked Lincoln smartly, before Lauzun arrived, and he was only saved from a rough handling by the approach of Washington with the main army.

Near the end of July, the junction of the two armies having been effected and all the necessary dispositions made, the allied force moved forward to the siege of New York. The first line was established within plain view of the British and was an effective gesture in emphasizing to the enemy that he was in a close and apparently closing state of siege. It must have given Washington real satisfaction to be able at last to move up near the enemy in broad daylight and flaunt the British by preparing for their destruction before their very face, a thing he had not been able to do since 1776.

This siege movement was nothing but a gesture, for reenforcements and supplies were coming in too slowly to justify any certainty of energetic action. General Knox as chief of artillery was striving to collect and forward siege material from Philadelphia, and after the lines were established across the northern end of Manhattan, there was nothing to do but wait for American reenforcements and supplies or a French fleet to give the naval superiority for which Washington prayed.

On August 14, 1781, came the first definite news of the approach of this naval superiority, Comte de Barras sent word that De Grasse had sailed from San Domingo with a large fleet and thirty-five hundred troops for the Chesapeake and could not remain there beyond the middle of October. The encouraging promise of this news was tempered by two depressing features. De Grasse was not coming to New York and Washington's dream of forcing the British from Manhattan was shattered. Along with this news, Barras announced his privately conceived, brilliant idea of sailing away on an expedition to Newfoundland. This dum-

founded Washington. For months he had been urging, begging and pleading for a naval superiority and now, with this in sight, a French squadron commander was seized with a yearning that would jeopardize that superiority by circumscribing the total strength of the French fleet. Rochambeau wrote a strong protest against Barras's plan and Washington added a postscript to the effect that he had intelligence that Admiral Digby was coming with naval reinforcements for the British. If he joined either Graves or Rodney and then found the French fleet separated, Washington with canny insight wrote, "it might eventually prove fatal to the fleets of his Most Christian Majesty." This was a contingency against which even Barras's yearning for glory could not maintain its strength and he agreed to meet De Grasse in the Chesapeake. He sailed far out to sea before bearing up for the Virginia Capes; Graves, on learning that Barras had sailed, put out from New York with a force strong enough to overwhelm him. When he reached the Chesapeake he found, not Barras but De Grasse, with a vastly stronger force than he had anticipated. The French Admiral slipped his cables and sailed out to meet the Englishman and in the five days' fighting which ensued, during which the two fleets maneuvered for the weather-gauge and fought each other now and again, the British were so badly cut up that Graves decided he must return to New York for repairs. It is difficult to see what else he could have done, as De Grasse was the stronger and with each engagement the disparity between the fleets became greater. When the Englishman sailed away and De Grasse returned to the capes he found Barras had arrived with the heavy siege guns which Rochambeau had left in Rhode Island. Control of the sea had passed from the British and the stage was set for the last act of the war!

Cornwallis, confident that Clinton would send him assistance from New York, was digging in at Yorktown and preparing to hold off Lafayette and the Virginia militia, which he felt perfectly confident of doing. He was unaware of the toils closing around him, and when he realized the situation, it was too late for him to do more than wait for Clinton to extricate him.

August fourteenth, Washington entered in his diary:

Matters have now come to a crisis. . . . I was obliged, from the shortness of the Count de Grasses promised stay on this coast, the ap-

parent disinclination of their naval Officers to force the harbour of New York and the feeble compliance of the States to my requisitions for Men, hitherto, and little prospect for greater exertion in the future, to give up all idea of attacking New York; and instead thereof to remove the French troops and a detachment from the American Army to the Head of Elk to be transported to Virginia for the purpose of cooperating with the force from the West Indies against the British troops there.

This selected detachment included troops from Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, Rhode Island, Hazen's Canadian regiment and some dragoons. The New England troops were left to hold the British in check in New York and to protect the Highlands; Washington feared discontent and worse, if the New Englanders were forced to march south, but in the light infantry the companies were made up of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Connecticut men, so that every state north of Carolina was represented at the siege of Yorktown.

The events and the result of this southern movement are so clearly before us that they interfere with an accurate appraisal of Washington's difficulties and herculean efforts. The usual story that Washington and Rochambeau marched south, secure in the knowledge that De Grasse was blocking both the rescue and escape of Cornwallis makes the matter appear very simple. Actually it was one of the most difficult and dangerous decisions of Washington's entire war career. He had not enough troops with which to attack New York, yet he was forced to take from that insufficient force as large a detachment as possible, turn his back on the main army of the enemy and, with all of the French Army, march over five hundred miles to attack a British Army of nearly ten thousand men which was, at the time the decision had to be made, a mobile force in the open field. Add to this the fact that the French fleet was only *said* to be coming, and Washington well knew that there were British fleets also upon the Atlantic which might interfere with, if they did not entirely stop, the French fleet from arriving. No need to wonder then at the great surge of relief that flooded through Washington when he received positive word that De Grasse was actually at the Virginia Capes. It is easy, with the settled events plainly before us, to look back and wonder why there should have

been any hesitancy or doubt. But Washington could not forget the risks he ran in leaving a skeleton army behind him to hold Sir Henry Clinton on Manhattan Island.

There can be little doubt that Washington gave up his hope of capturing New York with reluctance; but having given it up, he allowed no regret to interfere with the energies needed for the Virginia expedition. He plunged into the revised campaign with whirlwind energy. Orders began flying in every necessary direction and if any one has doubts of Washington's military ability or grasp of large events, he has but to read thoughtfully the many letters and orders that went out from headquarters from the first moment the Virginia movement was decided on. Letters to Lafayette, hinting but not too clearly, for fear of miscarriage, of what was coming; letters to Rochambeau and De Grasse guarding against misunderstandings; orders for a strict patrolling of the country to prevent intelligence getting through to the British; selecting Major-General Benjamin Lincoln to command the detachment of American troops and outlining for him, as well as Rochambeau, the routes of march; sending the latest news of the British fleets to Barras at Rhode Island; ordering the building of a French bakery at Chatham, New Jersey, and troops to guard it, as a blind; orders for the defense of the Highlands after the detachment had marched; and orders for putting the troops in motion. These were hectic days, but the arrangements and Washington's orders were carried out so smoothly and easily that the suppressed excitement was unnoticed, and the troops themselves did not suspect what was up or where they were going until they were well into Jersey with their backs turned to New York. Both the French and American troops crossed the Hudson at King's Ferry but from there they pursued different routes to Trenton. The Continental Army had made many long and difficult marches but this movement from the Hudson River Highlands to Williamsburg in Virginia was a tremendous feat of transportation, the entire credit of which belongs to the man who carried the war upon his shoulders from the beginning to the end. Quartermaster-General Timothy Pickering was at King's Ferry and so must be allowed credit for the passage of that river, although Washington's directions left little to be done beyond a soldierly carrying out of orders. After the troops and baggage were over, Pickering, so he tells us himself, went to visit his family in the Highlands and Washington "set

out for Philadelphia to arrange matters there, provide vessels and hasten the transportation of the Ordnance, Stores &ca."¹ This was certainly work that should have been done by the Quartermaster-General, but Pickering, with a strange sense of responsibility, remained with his family for so long that Washington wrote him rather a sharp letter from the Head of Elk. "It is of the utmost Importance to the service that Gent. who are acting as the head of departments should, at the present period, be with the troops. You will please therefore upon the receipt of this to join them with all possible dispatch." It was something of an old story to Washington to be unable to rely on many of his departmental staff officers and it was due to this ever-present expectation and disappointment that the Commander-in-Chief had become accustomed to taking charge of the supply business of the army at almost any moment. In this day and generation there is something appalling in the realization that the Quartermaster-General of the Continental Army did not think it necessary to be with the army on a march of over five hundred miles which had to be performed as rapidly as possible.

Two days after the above letter, Washington wrote again to Pickering (September eighth) giving the route by which the baggage, artillery and stores should travel from Christiana Bridge, Delaware, to Williamsburg, Virginia (a thing that the Quartermaster-General should have done), and ordering him to send on one of his assistants to mark out the stages and halting places along the route. He then ordered Pickering to join Lafayette in Virginia, possibly because he was well convinced by then that he could receive no worth-while assistance from the Quartermaster-General, and it is a question if there was not some keen satire lurking in the last paragraph of Washington's letter, when he informed Pickering that Colonel Lutterloh, the Assistant Quartermaster-General, would be given power to impress forage and see to providing for the horses and stock along the line of march. Pickering did not reach the army until the troops had disembarked on the James River and were on their march to Yorktown.

Every detail of this long march seems to have been thought of and provided for by Washington, even to the small point of ordering all the horses and stock to be made to swim the Delaware River rather than waste the time it would take to ferry them across. Time was everything, and Washington's letters to the officers urged speed at every turn.

The first few days after reaching Williamsburg were hectic with activity in bringing up the heavy siege ordnance and supplies of all kinds. Washington received a letter from General Greene descriptive of the southern situation and suggesting a joint expedition with the French against Charleston, South Carolina; the answer to it was in the form of a memorandum which Washington confided to Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis Morris, Jr., the contents of which were to be divulged to no one but Greene, and Morris was to destroy the paper as soon as he had committed the contents of it to memory. Morris obeyed his instructions but the draft of this important document was filed with Washington's papers which exhibits to us again the clear grasp Washington had of the war and its influencing factors. His ability to present these factors with the same clarity with which they appeared to him and, in this instance, to show the characteristics which welded the honest men to him and brought upon him the dislike and hatred of the dishonest. Washington explained to Greene that De Grasse had fixed upon the Chesapeake as his destination and was limited in the length of his stay. Cornwallis was in the Chesapeake in a fixed position and it was a cooperation there or nowhere. The Virginia campaign was the result of several fortuitous circumstances. (It is plain that Washington did not know the exact contents of Rochambeau's letter to De Grasse for, though the French General informed him that he had written to De Grasse, he neglected to mention the argument for the Virginia expedition which was so important a part of the letter.) Washington doubted, he wrote in the memorandum to Greene, if De Grasse would stay long enough to finish the Yorktown operation. If the British weakened their New York fleet by sending a number of ships to the West Indies, Washington would endeavor to persuade Barras to sail to Charleston with his squadron to cooperate with Greene.

The memorandum is remarkable for the frank statement by Washington regarding his coming into the Southern Department and taking over the command in that area, which he had given to Greene. It is a noticeable bit of tact, even among the numerous instances of Washington's heart-warming tact. No matter if events later rendered this tactful message unnecessary, it was a real Washington gesture, an honest expression of feeling that few commanding generals ever could, or ever did, display toward an inferior officer: "Col. Morris will inform General Greene,"

Washington's memorandum directed, "in the sincerest manner that there are but two motives which can possibly induce Genl. W— to take the command to the southward; one the order of C— to repair thither; the other, the French army going there. In the last case Count R— would command if Genl. W— did not go in person." Washington then added a touch of wishing to see Greene reap all the honor and laurels which his great exertions so richly deserved. As it happened, the allied armies went no farther south than Yorktown and Greene came no farther north than the Carolinas, so the question of command never properly arose; but this was a vastly different manner of handling the question from that which Washington applied to the selfsame situation in the Northern Department with Gates. The difference lay in Washington's understanding of the two men and of his knowledge of the political situation in the Continental Congress.

While Washington and Rochambeau were in Philadelphia, the French Army passed through the city and was reviewed by the President of Congress, whom the *Pennsylvania Packet* carefully tells us was "covered," while Washington and Rochambeau, who stood on the President's left, were "uncovered." Much as the Quakers were jeered at for their hat-wearing customs, it is amusing to note the importance attached to this subject in all ceremonials of the Continental Congress which guarded jealously the detail of hats on or hats off as an evidence of position and authority.

The effect upon Congress and the people, who had never seen uniformed and disciplined troops other than the Red-coats, was tremendously inspiring, and of course their destination, then no longer a secret, aroused an enthusiasm which seemed already to presage victory.

The French Minister, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, entertained the chief officials of Congress, General Washington and many of the French officers at dinner, on September fourth, and the next day Washington left Philadelphia, in company with Comte de Rochambeau and the Marquis de Chastellux for the Head of Elk, Baltimore and Mount Vernon. At Elk a lack of sufficient watercraft threatened, and Washington sent out a call to gentlemen he knew on the Eastern Shore for boats. These came rather rapidly and about one thousand Continentals, the artillery and several French regiments were selected for the first embarkation, while the rest of the

forces were ordered to march to Baltimore, there to embark or continue their march as circumstances should direct. At Elk a spirit of uneasiness over delayed pay began to manifest itself and again Washington wrote to Robert Morris, begging his exertions to procure a month's pay in specie for the troops, for above all things Washington dreaded an exhibition of backwardness before the French. He begged Morris to forward the coin "on the Wings of Speed." (He liked this metaphor, for he used it again in a letter to General Lincoln, September fifteenth, urging him onward with the troops.) Morris, almost at his wit's end, bethought him of the hard money brought over by the French (which was about the only considerable supply then available in the country) and with true American *insouciance* borrowed the needed amount from Comte de Rochambeau. He paid him back later, from the funds brought from France by John Laurens, which was a fair example of the financial straits to which the United States was driven in its anticipations of credit.

September ninth, Washington and the French Generals reached Mount Vernon and were welcomed by Mrs. Washington. The Commander-in-Chief immediately penned a brief note to the Marquis de Lafayette: "We are thus far, my dear Marquis, on our way to you. The Count de Rochambeau has just arrived. . . . I hope you will keep Lord Cornwallis safe, without Provisions or Forage until we arrive."²

CHAPTER LVIII

THE CAPTURE OF YORKTOWN

THE allied armies marched from Williamsburg against Yorktown September twenty-eighth, and drove in the British pickets from the entire front that same day. Lafayette's troops and the force debarked from the French fleet, had moved forward with the main body. Washington published his thanks, in General Orders, to the Marquis St. Simon, who commanded this latter force, for the rapidity with which he had disembarked his troops and the patience and firmness he had displayed under a shortage of rations when the supplies promised by Virginia failed to arrive. It was bad enough to have the American troops starved, but it was decidedly embarrassing to find that troops which had crossed the ocean to help America suffered for want of food which America could and should have furnished. As an emergency measure cornfields were confiscated.

The day before the armies marched from Williamsburg, Washington issued an order to the effect that if the enemy should attack the troops while on the march, he wished the army to place their principal reliance upon the bayonet to "prove the vanity of the Boast which the British make of their particular prowess in deciding Battles with that weapon." This was an unusual display of confidence in his men, such as Washington had not possessed in the earlier years of the war and it was a compliment to the French, whose superiority in close order fighting Washington mentioned.

On the second day after the allied armies arrived on the ground, Lord Cornwallis abandoned his outer line of works and retired to the inner defenses of Yorktown. The only reason discernible for this move was that his force was not sufficient to hold the extensive outer line, in the face of the offensive that he felt the allied armies could deliver. The French and Americans immediately took over the abandoned works and remodeled them to their use with little difficulty.

Matters went slowly the first few days, for there was great difficulty in

getting sufficient horses and wagons to transport the heavy artillery and ordnance stores from the James River to Yorktown. Washington sent his own baggage horses and wagons to aid and suggested that the officers do the same. (Twenty-two years before this, George Washington set the same example in giving up his bat-horses to help move the baggage of the army marching against Fort Duquesne.) A gill of rum was ordered to be distributed daily to the troops and they were warned against going into the houses of the country-folk round about, as the smallpox had broken out among the British in Yorktown and, to protect his troops, Cornwallis was ejecting the afflicted from his lines.

When the wagon teams arrived from the Head of Elk the heavy artillery came forward rapidly. The first encounter of any consequence with the enemy occurred at Gloucester, on the other side of York River, where detachments of American troops and the French cavalry under the Duc de Lauzun were holding the British garrison in check. Colonel Tarleton made a cavalry sortie from Gloucester and Lauzun met him with a whirlwind enthusiasm which hurled the British leader back with a loss of fifty or more killed and wounded while the French dragoons had but three killed and eleven wounded. Tarleton himself was wounded so badly as to eliminate him from the rest of the siege.

Again, as at the siege of Boston, Washington planned and dug his trenches silently in the night and by morning had them so far advanced that his troops were well protected from British fire. On the afternoon of October ninth the French opened upon Yorktown with their siege artillery and two hours later the American guns joined in. Doctor Thacher's military journal states that Washington himself fired the first shot from the American battery.

Regulations for the siege were published as General Orders by Washington, October sixth, and in fifty-five paragraphs they take care of practically every contingency. The trenches were relieved every twenty-four hours and the relief was ordered to march in without drum-beat and with colors cased.

A little human touch is found in Washington's forbidding spectators going into the trenches, which were quaintly known as "parallels." Officers off duty would go to the front to witness the bombardment and oftentimes escorted curious inhabitants. This interfered with the troops and

Washington forbade it in a sharply worded order. For the next three days the bombardment was incessant and the British fortifications slowly crumbled beneath the storm of shot and shell hurled against them. The French, being nearest the river, gave part of their attention to the British ships anchored off York and entirely destroyed the *Charon* frigate and three large transports, with well planted red-hot shot. On October fourteenth two redoubts at the opposite ends of the British line were carried by assaults, launched just after nightfall. The French assailed one and the American light infantry, commanded by Lafayette, the other. The two captured redoubts were covered into the besiegers' lines of approach and made a part of their system of entrenchments. Two days later the British made a sortie, but were driven back and the next day both French and Americans got their heaviest guns into action at short range. The end had come and Cornwallis was forced to accept the inevitable. At ten o'clock in the morning a British drummer, under a white flag, appeared on the parapet of Yorktown and beat a parley. A letter from Cornwallis proposing a cessation of hostilities for twenty-four hours, that commissioners might discuss terms of surrender, was answered by Washington that a desire to spare further bloodshed inclined him to treat for the surrender of York and Gloucester and that he would grant a cessation of hostilities for two hours, during which Cornwallis could submit his proposals in writing.

Within that time he sent out a letter with such proposals (tho' some of them were inadmissible) as led me to believe that there would be no great difficulty in fixing the terms. Accordingly hostilities were suspended for the Night and I prepared my own terms to which if he agreed Commissioners were to meet to digest them into form.¹

The inadmissible terms proposed by Cornwallis were practically the same that had been proposed by Burgoyne to Gates in 1777, though Cornwallis was clever enough not to use the word "convention." The British, in this case, were not dealing with one of their ex-army officers of limited intelligence, and the suave suggestion that the British troops be allowed to return to England and the German auxiliaries to Germany, under parole not to serve again during the war, was summarily refused. The whole of the day of October eighteenth was taken up with the negotiation and by

the British officers procrastinating matters at every turn, but a rough draft of the final articles was completed at the end of the day and early the next morning, October nineteenth, "I had them copied," wrote Washington, "and sent word to Lord Cornwallis that I expected to have them signed at 11 o'clock and that the Garrison would March out at two o'clock, both of which were accordingly done."

This is an astonishingly brief description of the crowning military triumph of Washington's life. The terms of surrender provided that the conquered troops should march out to the field of surrender on the outskirts of Yorktown, with colors cased and drums beating a British or German march. The same ceremony was followed at Gloucester on the other side of the river.

The British marched out from Yorktown through the French and American Armies, drawn up in two lines on either side of the road, their drums banging out the well-known and quite appropriate march called *The World Turned Upside Down*. To the British grenadier it certainly seemed that this had happened to the world, when a British Army of over seven thousand men was forced to surrender to the American rebels. Cornwallis, feigning illness, sent his sword by Brigadier-General O'Hara, and this unexpected substitution resulted in a curious little episode, which goes far to neutralize the impression, successfully cultivated by Washington's detractors, that he was a slow thinker.

It was as surprising to Washington as to every one else that Cornwallis did not appear, and it can hardly be doubted that had he done so, Washington would have received the surrender of his sword. But when Washington saw that Cornwallis had sent that sword by a substitute, it was the most natural thing in the world for the Commander-in-Chief to decline to deal with an inferior officer. This was the reason for Washington's meeting Cornwallis's cheap evasion of consequences with a dignity which put the formal act of surrender upon an even lower plane than Cornwallis attempted to place it. There was never a time throughout the Revolutionary War, where the dignity of the United States was involved, when George Washington did not master the situation and sustain that dignity to perfection. If the British Commander-in-Chief sent a substitute to surrender his army, the American Commander-in-Chief furnished a substitute to receive that surrender. It was an exquisite bit of quick thinking,

of which few American generals could have been capable. Comte de Rochambeau had already exhibited the French polite sense of the proprieties by setting O'Hara right when that general, intentionally or otherwise, attempted at first to surrender to him. Unmistakably directed to General Washington, he was as unmistakably shown that the American Commander-in-Chief would deal with no officer of less rank than the British Commander-in-Chief. At the climax of such an overwhelming triumph, what seemed like a mere punctilio might have passed unnoticed by most generals, but not by General George Washington. The British Army was surrendering to the United States and, though no amount of form evasion could alter that fact, if the British chose to surrender through a mere brigadier-general, that surrender would be received by no higher officer than a major-general. It is conceivable that had Cornwallis sent out his sword by a sergeant, Washington would have beckoned a sergeant from the ranks to receive it. There was no fiasco about the Yorktown surrender such as confused the Saratoga "Convention."

General Lincoln led the head of the British column to the open field where they laid down their arms, and one interesting account by an eyewitness states that they marched back into Yorktown through the ranks of the French and American Armies, just as they had marched out. Winchester, Virginia, and old Fort Frederick, across the Potomac in Maryland, were selected as prison camps for the British and Germans and they were started on their march northward, two days after the surrender. Cornwallis requested Washington to guarantee the safety of the Tory civilians which had come to Yorktown with him, but Washington replied that the matter was one of civil law and outside his jurisdiction. This was an uncompromising reply, but Washington's sympathy for these misguided folk, as he considered them, was real and he was ever ready to receive the sincerely repentant Tory back into the fold. A population to develop America as a nation, was more important than an indulgence in feelings of hatred and revenge. He could be, and was, coldly ruthless when the safety of the nation or the army demanded it; but out of the many deserters discovered in the British ranks after the surrender, and sentenced to death by court martial, he hanged but one and that one because it was an aggravated case of apostate banditry. After holding the rest in nerve-racking suspense for many days, he pardoned them. So, though

Washington brusksly swept aside Cornwallis's plea for the safety of the Tories, he gave the British General the opportunity to save these civilians by granting passports to five British vessels to sail to New York, ostensibly to convey to that city the British officers surrendered at Yorktown who were released on parole.

October twentieth, Washington's General Orders evinced his feeling. Oftentimes it is clear that his General Orders were nothing but frank propaganda in their exhortation and encouragement, and oftentimes the orders display that theatrical feeling which was so plainly a characteristic of Washington's nature; but the day after Yorktown, when the greatest military triumph of the war had been scored, there was nothing of this:

Divine Service is to be performed tomorrow in the several Brigades and Divisions. The Commander in chief earnestly recommends that the troops not on duty should universally attend with that seriousness of Deportment and gratitude of Heart which the recognition of such reiterated and astonishing interpositions of Providence demands of us.

Although Washington can by no means be classed as a religious enthusiast, he could not at this moment refrain from considering anew, more than he ever had before, the repeated and astonishing interpositions of Providence in behalf of America. He then added:

The generous proofs which his most Christian Majesty has given of his attachment to the cause of America must force conviction on the minds of the most deceived among the Enemy, relatively to the decisive good consequences of the Alliance and inspire every citizen of these States with sentiments of the most unalterable Gratitude.

Considering the knowledge Washington possessed of the group of patriots, so-called, who favored an accommodation with Great Britain and opposed the French Alliance secretly at every point, the phrase "most deceived among the Enemy," may be more closely akin to those who should have "sentiments of most unalterable Gratitude," than appears on the surface. In the same orders Washington publicly records his thanks to Rochambeau, De Grasse and others by name. He ordered two captured

brass guns presented to the regiments Gatinois and Deux-Ponts for their gallantry in storming the British right redoubt on the evening of October fourteenth; nor did he forget to give special thanks to General Lincoln, the Marquis de Lafayette, Baron von Steuben, Duportail, Ethis de Corny, Knox and D'Abbeville for their efforts and exertions in bringing up supplies and ordnance.

At Yorktown, as at Saratoga, the ruling British passion for squirming out of defeat wherever possible was displayed in a bumptious objection of the British officers, after the surrender, to the wording of the parole they were directed to sign. Cornwallis transmitted this objection to Washington. He was not sure, apparently, that the American Commander-in-Chief might not be like Horatio Gates; but Washington's reply made the difference clear. After expressing surprise that there could be any objection to the form of parole decided upon, Washington wrote: "However inclined I am to comply with your Lordship's wishes; I find myself in the impossibility of doing so on the present occasion." He asked Cornwallis to communicate his determination "to the Gentlemen who have made difficulties on the subject and exhort them to sign the form of parole which has been already proposed, if they are really desirous of going to New York and Europe." The paroles were signed.

Congress received the news with fitting enthusiasm, marched in a body to the Dutch Lutheran Church to offer thanksgiving for the victory, and issued a proclamation setting aside December thirteenth as a day of national thanksgiving. There was some display of bitterness on the part of the South Carolina delegates against Cornwallis, and Arthur Middleton moved that the Earl and all his officers be detained until the further orders of Congress; but this was voted down as an affront to Washington, Rochambeau and De Grasse, as well as a dishonorable violation of the capitulation.

Curiously too the articles of capitulation were referred to a committee for consideration, a procedure of caution which never occurred to any one as being necessary in the case of the Convention of Saratoga in 1777, which later caused Congress so much trouble, while the Yorktown surrender created not the slightest difficulty. The thanks of Congress were voted to Washington, Rochambeau and De Grasse and to the troops and seamen under them.

General Greene's plea for aid was not forgotten and as soon as the surrender arrangements were perfected, Washington detailed the Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania regiments as a reenforcement to march to Greene's assistance. A suggestion was made to De Grasse to transport these troops to Wilmington, North Carolina, with the Marquis de Lafayette in command, and there cooperate in the reduction of the British post at that place, which Washington thought could be accomplished in a very short time. After which perhaps De Grasse would be willing to transport the force to South Carolina and cooperate with General Greene against Charleston. If De Grasse could have looked into the future he would have been only too glad to carry out this plan, which would have added greatly to his reputation by entirely sweeping the British from the southern states; but after considering the matter with apparent favor, De Grasse decided he could do nothing more on the North American coast and sailed away to fulfil his engagements in the West Indies, and to meet a crushing defeat at Martinique.

The British rescue fleet appeared off the Virginia Capes before De Grasse was ready to sail, but learning that Cornwallis had surrendered, it put back to New York. The French Army went into winter quarters at Yorktown, Williamsburg and vicinity; the Continentals marched north to the Hudson River; Lafayette went to Philadelphia, obtained leave from Congress and returned to France.

Having seen the British prisoners march off to Winchester and Fort Frederick, Washington was tying up loose ends of the surrender when word came of the dangerous turn in young John Parke Custis's illness, contracted at the siege. He rode post-haste to Eltham in Kent County and arrived at the Bassetts' home in time to see Custis breathe his last.²

November twentieth, Washington set out for Philadelphia from Mount Vernon and two more dreary years of war were to elapse before he returned to it. Mrs. Washington accompanied him and the acclaim with which the General was greeted at every town did much to furnish distraction from her recent bereavement. Their arrival at Annapolis was an occasion of unusual festivities, balls and receptions, a public dinner by the State Legislature and an address from the Senate and House. Washington's reply was a warm expression of appreciation, coupled with a frank humility and a far-sighted plea to his friends to combat the public leth-

argy he foresaw would come as a result of the victory at Yorktown. Next to Alexandria, Annapolis and its people held place in Washington's affections, for the many cheerful, friendly hours he had spent in the old Chesapeake town; the races, theaters and card parties of colonial days lived in the warm places of his memory. The humility of his reply to the Legislature's address came with his acknowledgment that "It is with the highest degree of pleasure I observe that a proper allowance has been made for the capital share which the Land and Sea forces of our great and good Ally had in the reduction of the common enemy at York in Virginia. I should deem myself unpardonable, were I not upon every occasion, more especially upon such an one as the present, to declare that to the sound Councils and vigorous exertions of their Excellencies the Counts de Rochambeau and De Grasse much, very much of our success was owing."

When General and Mrs. Washington reached Philadelphia the latter part of November, the *Pennsylvania Journal* hailed the Commander-in-Chief as the savior of his country. He had already been titled "The Father of His Country" by Francis Bailey's *Lancaster Almanac*, for 1779,⁸ which is the earliest known record of the title.

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CHAPTER LIX

NATIONAL LETHARGY—VERMONT—THE ASGILL CASE— A KING'S CROWN OFFERED TO WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON's first days in Philadelphia were occupied by his public audience before Congress and with answering congratulatory addresses from the State Legislature, the University of Pennsylvania, the city magistrates of Philadelphia and others. Congress presented him with two stands of colors taken at Yorktown, honors were heaped upon him and a round of dinners and festivities commenced that was very trying to his sensibilities. The Society of the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick fêted him among the first and, for the rest, an oratorio and a theatrical performance managed by Alexander Quesnay de Glouvay, at the Southwark Theater, seem to have been the occasions that Washington found enjoyable. On Christmas Day General and Mrs. Washington dined with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Morris. Congress appointed another of its many Committees of Conference to consult with Washington on the military establishment and measures necessary for the next campaign, which the Commander-in-Chief was certain would have to be carried through, even though the blow received by Britain at Yorktown was a staggering one. "The King's speech," wrote Washington to Greene (February eighteenth), "at the opening of Parliament is firm and manifests a disposition to continue the war," and if anything more was needed to show how accurately Washington appraised the situation in his urgent appeals to the states not to relax their energies, it will be found in Vergennes's letter to Luzerne in Philadelphia. The wise French Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote: "Great preparations should be made [by America] for the next campaign. . . . The more they multiply their exertions, the more certain will be their success in procuring the tranquillity of their country. But if they return to their accustomed inactivity they will give England time to repair her losses, as she seems determined to do, and to prolong the war, which it is for the interest of the United States to terminate as soon as possible." The "accustomed inactivity" was a biting criticism, the more biting because of its

truth, and the last phrase was in the nature of a hint, which was not needed by one American at least. In a circular letter to the states Washington urged that "Unless we strenuously exert ourselves to profit by these successes, we shall not only lose all the solid advantages that might be derived from them, but we shall become contemptible in our own eyes, in the eyes of our enemy, and in the opinion of posterity, because we know not how to make a right use of it."¹

These were arguments which would and did appeal to Washington as powerful ones but, unfortunately, there were few American patriots of the eighteenth century sensitive to such logic. He felt that his "own reputation as well as the interest, the honor, the glory and happiness of my country are intimately connected with the event" and, because of that, though he was fully aware that he had stepped outside his authority in dealing with this civil matter, he asked the indulgence to speak more freely: "Although we cannot by the best concerted plans absolutely command success; altho' the race is not always to the swift, or the battle to the strong, yet, without presumptuously waiting for Miracles to be wrought in our favour, it is our indispensable duty with the deepest gratitude to heaven for the past and humble confidence in its smiles on our future operations, to make use of all the means in our power for our defence and security." Contrary to the prevailing feeling, Washington felt the necessity for a stronger army than ever before and that "nothing but a decidedly superior force can enable us boldly to proclaim our rights and dictate the law at the pacification." "I never was among the sanguine ones," he wrote the Reverend William Gordon, October 23, 1782, "consequently shall be less disappointed than People of that description, if our warfare should continue."

Against his will and inclination Washington was gradually becoming involved in the civil affairs of the nation. One of the most difficult of the domestic problems was submitted to his judgment by Governor Thomas Chittenden, of the New York Hampshire Grants. Chittenden's purpose was plain, but Washington did not pretend to understand many of the details of that complicated controversy. He answered Chittenden in simple direct language, making his letter a personal one and stating that the Governor could readily understand why Washington could neither write in his public character, nor address Chittenden in his. "As an individ-

ual," he wrote, "wishing most ardently to see the peace and Union of my Country preserved, and the just rights of the people of every part of it fully and firmly Established," Washington took it for granted that the rights of the inhabitants of the New Hampshire Grants to the territory they occupied were good; the boundary was the only question. This boundary was fixed, Washington felt, by the resolve of the Continental Congress of August 21, 1781, and he asked why a new claim was now put forth by the Vermonters. If new states requesting admission into the Union were to be permitted to claim the territory of old states in establishing their boundaries, the result would be endless confusion and dispute. Washington dreaded the coercion of Congress but dreaded, more than that, conditions which made coercion necessary. Then Washington touched upon one of the tenderest points, Vermont's negotiations with the British. With diplomatic tact, he took for granted that there was no real intention of joining the British, rather he enlarged upon the disadvantages which resulted to the whole country from the encouragement to continue the war which the enemy necessarily received from such negotiations. That, so far as Washington was concerned, was the crux of the whole matter and continued so until Congress, eight or nine months later, requested him to arrest the two active Vermont agitators, Luke Knowlton and Samuel Wells.

More and more, extraneous matters pressed in upon his attention and time, until it may be questioned if he would not almost have welcomed the field activities of another military campaign which would, perforce, have pushed all these bothersome tangles into the background.

Then out of a clear sky burst a storm of unexpected violence. Captain Joshua Huddy, of the New Jersey Artillery, was hanged by a band of marauding Tories, commanded by Captain Richard Lippincott, of the Associated Loyalists, in retaliation, it was claimed, for the murder of a loyalist named White. Huddy's corpse was found hanging at Sandy Hook with a rude paper placard pinned to his coat: "Up goes Huddy for Philip White." White was a loyalist who had been captured and shot while attempting to escape. It is difficult to get at the truth of the White killing. Feeling ran high between Tory and patriot in Jersey and some of the loyalist affidavits recanted previous testimony of having seen White's attempt to escape.

When word of Huddy's death reached the Continental Army headquarters, Washington immediately propounded four queries to the general officers and requested replies in writing. These replies were all practically the same, and, fortified by them, Washington dictated to Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., his military secretary, a letter to Sir Henry Clinton that blazed and stung. Huddy's death Washington called "The most wanton, unprecedented and inhuman murder that ever disgraced the Arms of a civilized people," and throwing all diplomacy to the winds, he delivered an ultimatum with the deadly precision of a battering-ram. "To save the innocent, I demand the guilty. Capt. Lippincott therefore, or the officer who commanded at the execution of Capt. Huddy must be given up; or" and here Washington blocked a probable quibble, "if that officer was of inferior rank" to Huddy "so many of the perpetrators as will according to the Tariff of Exchange be an Equivalent. To do this will mark the Justice of your Excellency's Character. In failure of it, I shall hold myself justified in the Eyes of God and Man, for the Measure to which I shall revert." Washington was in earnest. The situation called for drastic measures. Hostilities between the American and British Armies on a large scale seemed at an end, and Washington did not propose to allow a partizan civil warfare to spring up between the Tory and American militiamen and citizens, which Huddy's murder seemed to portend. The only organized authority that could stop the Tories and the British provincials or Tory militia, was the British Army, and to it Washington delivered his ultimatum. That he really expected Clinton to surrender Lippincott may well be doubted; certainly he would never have surrendered an American officer in a similar case, on a British demand. But he did expect and did intend to put a stop to guerrilla banditry and would go to extreme limits to effect it.

Clinton was stung into a speedy reply in which he expressed "Surprise and displeasure at the very improper Language" Washington used which, he said, was totally unnecessary as the mildness of the British Government did not admit acts of cruelty and persecuting violence. Clinton evidently was forgetful of English history; but he was quite within the truth when he claimed that such acts were contrary to his own disposition. He disavowed Huddy's hanging and claimed that those concerned had been ordered to trial four days before Washington's letter had been re-

ceived. He laid down the self-evident proposition that if such excesses were punished by the officers in command over the perpetrators, that would more surely prevent further excesses than retaliatory attempts by an enemy. He then made a few wholesale recriminative charges against Americans. Clinton's letter was a wise and clever one, but the Americans were too much wrought up to be logical in such a matter and Washington put the machinery in motion for selecting a victim. And here he was balked by the stupidity of Colonel Moses Hazen, who was in charge of the prison camp at Lancaster. Washington's orders were that a British captain was to be selected by lot from those prisoners who were not bound by any special restrictions. This Hazen stupidly ignored and as a result, the lot fell upon Captain Charles Asgill of the First Foot Guards who was one of the Yorktown prisoners, then in captivity, on a limited parole. He was not, therefore, an unconditional prisoner of war. By the time Washington learned the name and prisoner-status of the selected officer, the matter had gone too far to stop and no substitution or change could be made without weakening the force of the American position or complicating it.

As always, in matters of moment, Washington promptly reported to Congress the Huddy fact and his action upon it and Congress, the same day it received the report, resolved that the United States would no longer suffer "the unprecedented and inhuman cruelties" of its enemies, unanimously approved Washington's conduct and assured him "of their firmest support in his fixed purpose of exemplary retaliation."²

The next move of the British came from Lieutenant-General James Robertson, the Commander-in-Chief in America after Sir Henry Clinton's recall and before Sir Guy Carleton arrived in New York. This was an announcement of a court martial being convened to try Lippincott and retailing fifteen specific cases of barbarity committed by Americans on British loyalists. Washington's answer was a notification of the selection, by lot, of a British officer for execution in retaliation for Huddy's death.

Carleton arrived at New York a few days later and immediately wrote Washington expressing regret at the "unauthorized" execution of Captain Huddy. He protested his wish to prevent excesses; released an American lieutenant-colonel who was a prisoner of war, as an evidence of desire to cooperate in preventing retaliation, and asked for passports to allow Dr. Maurice Morgann to go to Congress on a peace mission; but Congress in

1782 was in no mood to listen to belated proposals of accommodation. It voted to refuse passports to Doctor Morgann and this last British effort to circumvent the colonists failed. Thereafter only treaty negotiations properly inaugurated by high administrative authority could be entertained.

But though Hazen blundered in his designation of the British officer who would be the victim in retaliation, he displayed real intelligence in another direction, for when the lot fell on Captain Asgill, the rage of the British officers who were prisoners of war flared up against the loyalists and they petitioned Hazen to allow one of them to go to New York on parole to represent the matter to the British Commander-in-Chief. This Hazen granted and the result, as anticipated, was an outburst of resentment among the regulars, for they rightly felt that they should not be held responsible for the actions of the loyalist militia officers. That a regular line officer should suffer for the barbarity of British provincial roused a state of feeling that made matters exceedingly difficult for Sir Guy Carleton. Much bad blood was engendered, more than one personal encounter took place and only the sternest authority kept a riot from starting in New York City. The ill-feeling between the regular forces and the Tories was intensified and the defense of New York became a more precarious matter than ever it had been before.

Two months went by before the court-martial proceedings upon Captain Lippincott were forwarded to Washington. Sir Guy Carleton made quite a ceremony of it by forwarding the record by the hands of Chief Justice Frederick Smyth. Not to be outdone in ceremonial courtesy, Washington designated Major-General William Heath to receive the document and hear whatever the Chief Justice had to say on the occasion, though Carleton had already been informed that Washington would not recede from his determination.

The British court martial, as was to be expected, acquitted Lippincott of guilt in Huddy's execution, for whether guilty or not, Britain, despite her high protestations, could not risk the trouble bound to result from punishing a loyalist for cruelty to a rebel. Carleton, notwithstanding the acquittal, reprobated Lippincott's action in "unequivocal terms and has given assurances of prosecuting a further inquiry." This, wrote Washington to Congress, "has changed the ground I was proceeding upon, and placed the matter upon an exceedingly delicate footing."⁸

That Carleton was sincere is evidenced by his suppression of the Board of Associated Loyalists, which dissipated the organized power of the Tories and reduced to a great degree the chances of a recurrence of Tory barbarities.

It was with a sense of relief that Washington found himself justified in leaving the matter, as it had developed, in the hands of Congress. The committee in that body to whom the matter was referred did not bring in a report until October and by then Washington had received a letter from Comte de Vergennes respecting Asgill. Lady Asgill, the Captain's mother, had appealed in desperation to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to save her son. It was a pitiful plea. "Your Excellency," wrote Vergennes to Washington, "will not read this letter without being extremely affected; it had that effect upon the King and Queen to whom I communicated it." Their Majesties desired "that the inquietude of an unfortunate mother might be calmed." With polished phrase Vergennes admitted the "odious crime that a formal denial of justice" obliged Washington to avenge; but there were cases "where humanity itself exacts the most extreme rigor." Perhaps Asgill's case was one of these and, with courtly charm, the Frenchman stated that Washington's character was too well known for Vergennes "not to be persuaded that you desire nothing more than to be able to avoid the disagreeable necessity of this retaliation." He then excused his interposition by cleverly calling attention to the fact that Captain Asgill, while undoubtedly Washington's prisoner, was one of those made so by the help of the French arms at Yorktown. This, while it gave Vergennes no claim, justified his interest. "I sincerely wish, Sir," Vergennes concluded "that my intercession may meet success. . . . It is rendering homage to your virtue to implore it."⁴

Such a letter could not fail of result, though Washington immediately forwarded it to Congress without comment. On November seventh, Congress directed that Asgill be released and an incident, most distasteful to Washington, was happily closed. He at once sent Asgill a passport to go to New York, unconditionally released as a prisoner of war, and in the letter forwarding the document he informed the British Captain:

that in whatever light my agency in this unpleasant affair may be viewed, I was never influenced, through the whole of it by sanguinary

motives, but by what I conceived my sense of duty, which loudly called upon me to take measures, however disagreeable, to prevent a repetition of those enormities, which have been the subject of discussion. And that this important end is likely to be answered without the effusion of the blood of an innocent person, is not a greater relief to you, than it is to, Sir, your most obedient and humble servant Go: Washington.”⁵

Washington had scarce time to draw a breath of relief at the finish of the Asgill case, before the food contract dispute, previously mentioned, developed a new seriousness. The Commander-in-Chief urged upon Morris the necessity for a speedy relief “as I do not know to what extremities the present Uneasiness may push us.” Before a week had passed, he received evidence of an uneasiness that shook him to his soul.

Colonel Lewis Nicola, Commandant of the Invalid Regiment, sent Washington a plan or scheme for consideration which, after reciting the prospects of the army to secure its just dues and the apparent hopelessness of obtaining them, suggested a change from the then form of government to that of a monarchy, with the ruler having the title of KING. The inference throughout the entire document was that the army would follow and support Washington to gain this title and that Nicola was only repeating an idea that was universal throughout the army. There was really nothing startling or unusual in such thoughts to a European mind and Nicola was a European, though a firm American patriot. To most minds the startling thing was the system of government the American States were then attempting to create, which the world had never seen before. But to George Washington, who had staked his all—mind, principle, property and effort—upon the experimental democracy, Nicola’s suggestion was a terrific shock. In that one idea Washington saw all he had endured and struggled and fought for, swept away and his whole life-work hurled to ruin because of the inefficiency and political muddling of those responsible for the welfare and comfort of the army. Small wonder then, that he should have been both surprised and astonished that the men who had followed him with such dogged determination, who had trusted him through the bitterness of hunger, nakedness and suffering, were now, with victory in plain sight, to fail him. More than that, to tempt him to fore-swear his own honor to alleviate their distress. The painfulness of the

shock was mixed with abhorrence and revulsion. But Washington's own words are best:

With a mixture of great surprise and astonishment I read with attention the Sentiments you have submitted to my perusal. Be assured Sir, no occurrence in the course of the War, has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the Army as you have expressed, and I must view with abhorrence and reprehend with severity. For the present the communication of them will rest in my own bosom, unless some further agitation of the matter, shall make a disclosure necessary.

I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs that can befall my Country. If I am not deceived in myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes were more disagreeable; at the same time in justice to my own feelings I must add that no Man possesses a more sincere wish to see ample justice done to the Army than I do, and as far as my powers and influence in a constitutional way may extend, they shall be employed to the utmost of my abilities to effect it, should there be any occasion.

Let me conjure you then, if you have any regard for your Country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your Mind, and never communicate, as from yourself, or any one else, a sentiment of the like nature. With esteem, I am Sir
Yr most obdt. Sert.

Here George Washington, stirred to the depths gives out, at white heat, the real thought of his soul. That he was doubtful of what was behind Nicola's suggestion is proved by the attestation which he asked his two aides de camp to make to his file draft of the letter, for among all the thousands of letters written by Washington, this is the only known case where such a precaution was taken. The searing blast of this reply to Nicola's suggestion shriveled the King idea to ashes.

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CHAPTER LX

CONTINUANCE OF THE WAR—UNEASINESS IN THE ARMY— THE NEWBURGH ADDRESSES

IN THE middle of 1782, Washington believed that "the subjugation of America, so far at least as to hold it in a dependent state, is of too much importance to Great Britain to yield the palm to us, while her resources exist."¹ In September he was sure "That the King will push the war, as long as the nation will find men or money . . . if we are wise, let us prepare for the worst. There is nothing which will so soon produce a speedy and honorable peace as a state of preparation for war." But he could not rouse the states to the energy and efforts he knew were necessary. The war as a war was subsiding into a state of partial neutrality. The British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Guy Carleton, informed Washington several times that all hostilities stood suspended on his part, which, so far as his immediate command at New York was concerned, was true. Washington, however, replied that this statement needed explanation: "I can have," he wrote, "no conception of a suspension of hostilities, but that which arises from a mutual agreement of the powers at war and which extends to naval as well as land operations." Whether the practical suspension of hostilities which Carleton had effected was owing to political or other motives, Washington declared it was not for him to decide. The British Navy was then more active than usual on the American coast and it was difficult, as Washington stated, to understand a suspension of hostilities on land while they continued unabated on sea. As he expressed it to Tench Tilghman:

Sir Guy gives strong assurances of the pacific disposition of His most gracious Majesty, by Land, Sir (that is to be) Digby, gives proofs, if he is deficient in assurances, of his said Excellent Majesty's kind intention of Capturing everything that swims on the face of the *Waters*; and of his humane design of suffocating all those who are found thereon, in Prison Ships, if they will not engage in his service.

This, to an American, whose genius is not susceptible of refined ideas, would appear somewhat inconsistent; but to the expanded mind of a Briton they are perfectly reconcilable.²

The Secretary at War, Major-General Benjamin Lincoln, had asked Washington's opinion earlier in the year as to the feasibility of an operation against New York City and sent the Commander-in-Chief an estimate of the strength of the British in that city. It was but another of the many unnecessary irritations to which Washington was continually subjected by Congress, throughout the war. In reply Washington endeavored to explain the matter by some elemental mathematics by which even the Continental War Office might be able to understand how wrong it was in its estimates. With painstaking care Washington set down the results of his spies' activities and among the many pieces of information he had obtained through his clever secret agents, was the before mentioned official general return of the entire British Army, signed by the British Adjutant-General, which Washington's light-fingered ghosts had managed to filch from Sir Guy Carleton's own file. Against such information the War Office guesses were worthless. There were nine thousand British regulars in New York, and thirty-three hundred loyalist militia. In the southern garrisons were four thousand regulars, a part or all of which might reenforce New York City if necessary. The American strength was seventy-five hundred Continentals, which could be increased to nine thousand if the states would only furnish their quotas. Adding to this last the total of Rochambeau's army, would bring the available fighting force of America up to thirteen thousand. It was considered by the best European soldiers, Washington wrote, that the besiegers of a fortified post should be three times as numerous as the besieged. This would require thirty-seven thousand men and to meet this the states would have to furnish twenty-four thousand. As they had not yet shown any ability or inclination to raise the nine thousand men their quota demanded, it seemed quite unlikely to Washington that they would furnish nearly three times that number. But so anxious was he to make a great effort to bring the war to an end, that he announced his willingness to make the attempt with only double the number of the British garrison. Even here the states, he felt, would prove recalcitrant and the only hope lay in persuading France to reenforce

Rochambeau's army by five or six thousand men. Whether this was a possibility Washington did not know. What he did know was the unrest that was beginning to seethe anew through his army; not only among the rank and file, but this time among the officers. Clothing, thanks to France, had ceased to be a subject of complaint, but the lack of food and pay was wearing down the patience and rousing the wrath of the army. It saw the civilian employees of the government regularly receiving their pay while the army's was delayed and postponed. Washington voiced the discontent among the officers in his letter to the Secretary at War (October 2, 1782).

It is vain, Sir, to suppose, that military men will acquiesce contentedly with bare rations, when those in the civil walk of life (unacquainted with half the hardships they endure) are regularly paid the emoluments of office. . . . A military man has the same turn to sociability as a person in civil life. He conceives himself equally called upon to live up to his rank and his pride is hurt when circumstances restrain him. Only conceive then the mortification (even the general officers) must suffer when they cannot invite a French officer, a visiting friend or a travelling acquaintance to a better repast than stinking whiskey (and not always that) and a bit of Beef without vegetables will afford them.

Even this complaint was something of a minor one. Washington went more into details in his letter to Robert Morris (May 17, 1782) and reported the difficulty in suppressing a mutiny of the Connecticut troops. The growing number of deserters and new discontents with the contractors, increasing day by day, led him to express the thought to James McHenry, October seventeenth, that the breaking point had been nearly reached. "The patience, the fortitude, the long and great suffering of this army is unexampled in history; but there is an end to all things and I fear we are very near one to this. Which more than probably will oblige me to stick very close to my flock this winter, and try, like a careful physician, to prevent, if possible, the disorders getting to an incurable height." He had intended to ask Congress for a leave of absence to visit Mount Vernon during the winter, but the situation was too alarming and he made no request. But as the weeks went by, after the Nicola letter and the Connecticut mutiny, without any further outbreak, Washington's hopes slowly

strengthened that the army's discontents could and would be alleviated before the explosion he dreaded occurred. His thoughts dwelt continually upon this dangerous situation and his letter to General Greene, February 6, 1783, shows his habit of mind as subconsciously seeking the solution of present difficulties in a review of the past: "If historiographers should be hardy enough to fill the page of History with the advantages that have been gained with unequal numbers (on the part of America) in the course of this contest, and attempt to relate the distressing circumstances under which they have been obtained, it is more than probable, that Posterity will bestow on their labors the epithet and marks of fiction; for it will not be believed, that such force as Great Britain has employed for eight years in this country could be baffled in their plan of subjugating it, by numbers infinitely less, composed of men often times half starved, always in Rags, without pay, and experiencing at time every species of distress, which human nature is capable of undergoing." The day before writing this, Washington had drawn a vivid, thumbnail sketch of the army for General Heath: "Without amusements or avocations I am spending another winter (I hope it will be the last that I shall be kept from returning to domestic life) amongst these rugged and dreary mountains. I have however the satisfaction of seeing the troops better covered, better clothed and better fed, than they ever have been in any former winter quarters. And this circumstance alone would make any situation tolerable to me." Here is an unexpected glimpse of the heavy strains of the past seven winters upon Washington, and there is something almost pathetic in the calm philosophy of the circumstance that would make any situation tolerable to him. "In a little time," he went on, "I hope to turn their duty into an amusement by awakening again the spirit of emulation, and love of military parade and glory, which was so conspicuous the last campaign. I shall expect (as soon as the weather will permit in the spring) to see the general officers daily on horseback at the head of their commands, teaching them by precept and example, everything that is reputable and glorious in the profession of arms . . . in the meantime I shall struggle to while away the season in laying the foundation for those things. Tomorrow, being the anniversary of the alliance with France we shall have a military exhibition."

This military exhibition was the culmination of a series of parades and reviews which had begun with the celebration of the birth of a dauphin of

France in May, 1782, and in which artillery salutes, field maneuvers and the *feu de joie* gave color to the army's military life. Washington knew how to maneuver as well as to fight an army and the praise of the French officers for the appearance and discipline of the Continental regiments, repaid him for much that he had suffered. Without subservience, Washington valued the opinion of the French and his patriotism made him feel a warm glow of pride when capable men praised his country, its army, its navy or Congress. It was the subconscious, unselfish pride of the parent and "Des Landes Vater" of the old *Lancaster Almanac* was more than justified.

The French Army had marched north from Williamsburg as the warm weather set in and the Continentals broke camp at Newburgh, August thirty-first, and moved down the Hudson to meet them. After Yorktown the Continental Army reached its highest point of efficiency and as a test of that efficiency Washington ordered this movement down the river to be made by water. This complicated maneuver was announced in orders only the day before, but the army struck its tents, loaded its impedimenta, embarked in boats and moved down the river from Newburgh to Verplanck's Point on schedule time, without delay or hitch of any kind. The baggage and artillery went by land, down the west side of the Hudson. It is doubtful if such a movement could have been easily accomplished at any previous period of the war, and that it was effected smoothly in 1782 spoke wonders for the efficiency developed by the Continental Army machine. It was a play, a military pageant, which delighted General George Washington. For the first time in the war the American Army, completely equipped, functioned with the exact precision and all the color of a perfected military machine. It may be doubted if the age-old and beautiful mountain water gap of the Hudson Highlands has ever since seen a more inspiring picture than that mile long procession of boats in the morning sunshine, filled with bright uniforms and glittering bayonets, flags snapping in the breeze and the music of fife and drums floating across the sparkling blue water, to echo and re-echo from the massive cliffs of Storm King and Crow Nest.

The troops landed and encamped at Verplanck's Point. When Rochambeau and his staff crossed King's Ferry, they found the Continentals drawn up in two lines to receive them and the Comte and his officers were

escorted through these ranks to Washington's headquarters. This was General George Washington's military compliment to France, for France had furnished the uniforms and arms with which these Continental troops were equipped and, it should be added, Rochambeau had generously waived all claim to the British arms and clothing captured at Yorktown, in favor of the Americans. As soon as the two generals met at headquarters, the Continental Army marched in review and maneuvered before them with a disciplined steadiness and silence which brought unstinted praise from the French, who expressed astonishment at the great progress the Americans had made during the few months the armies had been separated. Could Washington have had an army in 1776 as trained and completely equipped as were the troops at New Windsor in 1782, the history of the Revolution would have been vastly different. And it is depressing to realize that he would have had such an army, if his advice and recommendations had been adopted by Congress.

A week after the French troops crossed King's Ferry, Washington reviewed them at Crompond, a few miles east of Verplanck's Point. The next day the American Army performed field evolutions before the French and Washington entertained the French officers at dinner. A month later the Continentals again paraded before the French as a farewell gesture, when Rochambeau's troops were ready to march to Boston to embark for the West Indies. Rochambeau himself sailed from Annapolis in January, 1783. Through all this military parade and pomp, the ghost of army unrest was ever at Washington's elbow. To Alexander Hamilton, then a member of Congress, Washington wrote (March 4, 1783) in answer to a letter of warning from Hamilton that it was whispered the army would not disband until proper provision was made for its pay, that he stood in a critical and delicate predicament, both as a citizen and a soldier. "The sufferings of a complaining army on one hand and the inability of Congress and tardiness of the States on the other, are forebodings of evil, that may be productive of events, which are more to be deprecated than prevented." Washington felt "that the sensible and discerning part of the army" was aware of the services he had always rendered it, "The just claims of the army ought, and it is to be hoped will have their weight with every sensible legislature." To his brother, John Augustine (January 16, 1783), he had waxed satiric, with a dry humor which the grinding years

and heavy responsibilities could not entirely eradicate. "The army as usual is without pay and a great part of the soldiery without shirts; and the patience of them is equally threadbare, it seems to be a matter of small consequence to those at a distance. In truth if one were to *hazard an opinion* for them on this subject, it would be, that the army having contracted a habit of living without money, it would be injurious to it to introduce other customs."

Then came the shock of the announcement that Robert Morris had resigned as superintendent of finance and before a readjustment of this complication was settled by Congress the storm in the army broke. Anonymous addresses were circulated through the encampment at Newburgh calling a general meeting of the officers to discuss their situation, to address Congress and, in fine, to take by force what, the addresses intimated, was denied them by fraud. Knowing full well the dangerous temper of the army and realizing that this was a call to the officers, and not a wild appeal to the rank and file to resort to violence; instead of opposing, Washington forestalled the danger by calling a meeting of the officers for a day in advance of the date fixed by the anonymous address,³ which placed the movement upon an official basis and in so doing necessarily lessened the opportunity for malcontents to blare out their mutinous and insubordinate purposes, by attaching military responsibility to their actions. It was a wise move and its wisdom became evident at the meeting. The officers assembled in the Public Building (sometimes called the Temple) at Newburgh and Major-General Horatio Gates was elected chairman of the meeting. Washington entered and strode to the raised desk beside which sat the chairman. Here was a most perfect setting for an actor, but the devastating effects of the fire and flood of eight years of war had burned out and washed away much of the histrionic in Washington's make-up. He met rugged things with rugged sincerity and had neither thought nor time for aught else. Yet a small bit of old-fashioned courtesy, at the beginning of his address to the officers, had a greater effect than the address itself and accomplished everything which Washington hoped would be accomplished, in saving the situation. Lieutenant-Colonel David Cobb, one of Washington's aides, tells the story: "When the General took his station in the desk or pulpit . . . he took out his written address from his coat pocket and his spectacles with his other hand from

his waistcoat pocket and then addressed the officers. . . . 'Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown gray, but almost blind in the service of my country.' " This little remark and the manner of delivering it, says Cobb, drew tears from many of the officers present. The reading of the prepared address was then unnecessary; nevertheless it is such a calm sane document that it deservedly ranks with the letter to Nicola and the circular to the states in June, 1783. Washington declared he had "ever considered my own Military reputation as inseparably connected with that of the army." "Why," he asked the officers, "do anything now that would tarnish the reputation of an army which is celebrated throughout Europe for its fortitude and patriotism?" He assured the officers that he would do everything in his power to obtain justice for them, consistent "with the great duty I owe my Country."

The depths to which Washington had been stirred by the anonymous addresses are plain from the power and solemnity of his own address to the officers, and though the last sentence is something of an anti-climax from an oratorical standpoint and is a good example of Washington's formal, flowery style, there can be no doubt of his sincerity and real feeling in the matter.

After delivering his address, Washington withdrew from the meeting and the officers concluded the business by adopting a sober and dignified memorial to Congress, praying the grant of their back pay and a half-pay establishment at the close of the war. In fulfilment of his assurances, Washington wrote to Congress (March 18, 1783) one of the strongest letters he ever wrote to that body, urging it to grant all the prayers of the officers' memorial.

If the whole Army have not merited whatever a grateful people can bestow, then I have been beguiled by prejudice, and built opinion on the basis of error . . . and if (as has been suggested for the purpose of inflaming the passions) the officers of the army are to be the only sufferers by this resolution; if, retiring from the field, they are to grow old in poverty wretchedness and contempt; if they are to wade through the vile mire of dependency, and owe the miserable remnant of their life to charity, which has hitherto been spent in honor; then shall I have learnt what ingratitude is, then shall I have realized a tale, which will embitter every moment of my future life.

He wrote even more emphatically to several influential members of Congress, telling them in unvarnished phrases what might be expected unless justice was done to the army. In the end Congress did grant the half-pay for life to the officers, with the privilege of taking five years full-pay instead. "The good sense, the virtue and patient forbearance of the army on this, as upon every other trying occasion . . . has again triumphed."⁴

It did not occur to Washington that this forbearance of the army was due entirely to his own personal influence, so unconscious was the man of everything but the best solution of the serious problem before him.

CHAPTER LXI

THE WESTERN TOURS—TOOTHACHE—BOOKS—LAST ORDERS TO THE ARMY—MATRIMONIAL ADVICE

THE year 1783, though merely a year of waiting for the finish of peace negotiations in Europe, was filled with activity for Washington. The latter part of 1782 he had made a tour up the Hudson as far as the Esopus, where he crossed over to Kingston, to the great delight of the inhabitants of that quaint old town. From thence he traveled, he states "along the Western Frontier of the State of New York" which designation of the eastern foot-hills of the Catskill Mountains shows how very far to the east the Indian raids extended. Some months later, he undertook a second journey to save himself from being bedeviled beyond the limits of his self-control, by small and irritating inconsequentials. He reported to Congress (July 16, 1783):

Finding myself in most disagreeable circumstances here, and likely to be, so long as Congress are pleased to continue me in this awkward situation, anxiously expecting the definitive treaty, without command [nearly all the troops by this date had been disbanded] and with little else to do, than to be teased with the troublesome applications and fruitless demands, which I have neither the means nor the power of satisfying; in this distressing tedium I have resolved to wear away a little time, in performing a tour to the northward, as far as Ticonderoga and Crown Point and perhaps as far up the Mohawk River as Fort Schuyler.

He followed out his intention and, in company with Governor George Clinton and others, was absent nearly three weeks in which time he traveled about seven hundred and fifty miles, mostly on horseback. With Clinton he purchased several thousand acres of land in the Mohawk Valley (Coxeburgh) which proved to be the most successful of all his land speculations, as he sold a goodly number of the acres during his lifetime at a

profit and his will disclosed the possession of a thousand unsold acres which he valued at six dollars an acre. His nephew, George Steptoe Washington, bought this land from the estate at five dollars an acre and disposed of it shortly thereafter at six dollars and forty cents and six dollars and fifty cents an acre, which was a complete vindication of his uncle's real-estate judgment.

As the war ceased to press upon him, Washington's private affairs and personal fortune became matters of concern. There was good reason for his wishing to go to Mount Vernon the winter of 1782-83. Lund Washington, who had been managing those farms from the commencement of the war, had not been successful with them and, indeed, it is questionable if any one other than George Washington himself, who loved every foot of the soil, could have made Mount Vernon a financial success. There was a justifiable complaint in his letter of June 11, 1783, to Lund, in which he feared "that worse than going home to empty coffers and expensive living, I shall be encumbered with debt."

He asked his brother, John Augustine, to take charge of their mother's affairs which were causing him worry. "You may enquire into her real wants; and see what is necessary to make her comfortable. If the rent is insufficient to do this, while I have anything, I will part with it to make her so."¹ Detractors of Washington point to his irritability at this time as indicative of his normal character. They forget the physical as well as mental strains of the war which were beginning to show in these outbursts of righteous indignation. Not a small item of the physical strain was caused by his teeth. They were steadily deteriorating in spite of his great care of them. The main cause of this deterioration probably was the lack of proper food in camp, as Washington's teeth began to decay during those hard years of service upon the Virginia frontier, in colonial times.

By 1783 his teeth were definitely going. Fighting such a war as the American Revolution was task enough without being bothered at the same time with aching teeth and even the most philosophic statesman might be pardoned for an occasional show of irascibility under such circumstances. There was in 1783 a French dentist in New York City, a Dr. John Le Mayeur, who had come to America to practise his profession and, landing in New York, had been detained there by the British. One of Washington's aides, Lieutenant-Colonel William Stephens Smith, was al-

lowed by Sir Guy Carleton to enter the city and in May, 1783, Washington wrote him: "Having some teeth which give me a good deal of pain"—then he crossed out the pain and substituted—"which are very troublesome to me and of which I wish to be eased provided I could substitute others (not by transplantation, for of this I have no idea even with young people, and sure I am it cannot succeed with old) and Gums which might be relieved by a Man of Skill" he asked Smith to make quiet inquiries as to this French doctor. Later, Le Mayeur came out and treated Washington's teeth. It may not be easy to appreciate much of the hardship suffered by Washington during the Revolutionary War, but there is no difficulty in understanding toothache. The strain of finding pay for an army where money was all but unobtainable, of keeping that army from mutiny, of arranging for the release of thousands of prisoners of war, of arranging for the evacuation of a large city and endeavoring at the same time to keep the British from carrying off American property, becomes more vivid when we know that toothache was gnawing at Washington's nerves through it all.

Washington needed relief badly before the siege of Yorktown, for he wrote to Major Andrew Billings for some small tools and especially a small file, one that would go between the teeth and that could be bent around them. He would try his own skill evidently, if he could not get a dentist, and this is an interesting item as to George Washington's manual dexterity, of which overseers at Mount Vernon did not need to be convinced. Despite his large hands, his fingers were skilful, for he made the gold wire springs which held his teeth-plates in position; not only made the springs, but adjusted them to the plates, which was a delicate mechanical operation.

The letter to Smith about Doctor Le Mayeur (May 15, 1783) requested also the purchase of several books, among which were The Duke of Hamilton's travels through France; Young's *Tour through Ireland*, both of which Washington had seen advertised in Rivington's *Gazette*. In two subsequent letters to Smith, other book purchases were requested which included the lives of Charles XII of Sweden, and Lewis XIV of France; the life and reign of Peter the Great, Robertson's *History of America* (two volumes), *Wildman on Trees*, "If in Estimation"; Vertal's *History of the Revolution of Rome* (three volumes), the same of Portugal and a

good bookseller's catalogue, so that Washington could select what he wanted. This certainly is not the thought or act of a non-reader. He ordered the purchase of a *Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, *Life of Gustavus Adolphus*, Sully's *Memoires*, *The World Displayed*, in twenty pocket volumes, "if it is an esteemed work"; Goldsmith's *Natural History*, the *Campaigns of Marshal Turenne*, Chambaud's French-English, English-French Dictionary and *Locke on the Human Understanding* (in two volumes). The tour of France and Chambaud are indications of his playing with the idea of a visit to Europe after the war, of which he wrote, in response to Lafayette's invitation, that his deranged affairs would prevent him from visiting France. But the books he purchased and allusions, here and there, in his 1783 letters show that a visit to Europe was at least half-considered.

This travel idea changed from Europe to America and was outlined to Lafayette as a tour through New England and the northwest, the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi to New Orleans, Pensacola and the Carolinas. "A great tour this . . . probably it may take place nowhere but in imagination."² But it shows that Washington's mind was already beginning to shake itself loose from the pressure of military things. Before the curtain could be drawn, however, much remained to be done. The British were slow in withdrawing from New York, which was not actually intentional but due to the delay in the arrival of sufficient transports for the troops. The western frontier posts were to be evacuated, according to the terms of the treaty, but Great Britain had already made up her mind to hold them as hostages for the performance of all treaty agreements on the part of the United States, so when Washington sent Baron Steuben to receive the posts, Sir Frederick Haldimand, the Commander-in-Chief in Canada, refused to surrender them on the ground that he had not as yet received any instructions in the matter. The posts were not surrendered until Washington's second term as president. But the beginning of the end came early in April, 1783, when Sir Guy Carleton informed Washington that the English King had ordered a cessation of hostilities. On receipt of directions from Congress to cease hostilities, Washington with true dramatic touch, ordered them to cease at noon, April nineteenth. In this, as in many other hardly noticed minor details, George Washington displayed the romantic strain which was so truly a part of him. There had

been no shots fired for weeks and he could just as easily have ordered the cessation of hostilities for April seventeenth or eighteenth, or even April twentieth; he had known this was coming since April ninth. But the first shots of the war had been fired at Lexington and Concord, April 19, 1775, and to George Washington the poetic date was April nineteenth. At noon on that day the cessation was announced from the public buildings at Newburgh and the chaplains of the army were directed to "render thanks to Almighty God for all his mercies, particularly for his over-ruling the wrath of man to his glory, and causing the rage of war to cease among the nations." An anthem *Independence* (from Billings's *No King but God*) was sung, accompanied by the Continental bands.

After this the troops were rapidly furloughed by an economical and safety seeking Congress, until so few remained in camp that daily guard mounting was discontinued.

Early in June, 1783, Washington wrote a circular letter to the governors of the states, on the disbanding army. It was, he stated, his last official communication as Commander-in-Chief to the governors. The exordium of this document is another example of Washington's efforts to carry conviction with a flowery literary style, of truths he sincerely felt. Despite the structure of his paragraphs, he makes his sincerity felt and in that sincerity, he now and then forgets style and pens sentences of simplicity and power. "There is an option left to the United States of America, that it is in their choice and depends upon their conduct, whether they will be respectable and prosperous, or contemptible and miserable, as a nation." Washington's ambition for the United States to act a worthy national part, is plain and strongly expressed. Four things he felt were essential to the national existence. (1) An indissoluble union of the States. (2) A sacred regard to public justice. (3) The adoption of a proper military peace establishment and, (4) A spirit of cooperation, minus local prejudice, in order to strengthen the union.

A peace establishment was disregarded for some years. The indissoluble union underwent many heavy strains before it became firmly established. The "sacred regard to public justice" is still as "essential to the . . . existence of the United States," as it was in 1783, and the "friendly disposition among the people of the United States . . . to make mutual concessions, which are requisite to the general prosperity; and in some in-

stances, to sacrifice individual advantages to the interest of the community" may be thought of and practised with profit to the country at all times. The first three points Washington discussed, but left "the last to the good sense and serious consideration of those immediately concerned." His observations on the first three points were a plain, common-sense analysis of the governmental necessities of 1783 and a few of his sage remarks apply to the governmental practises of the United States to-day and will continue to apply to them for many years to come. The necessity of the states delegating a portion of their power to the general government was a prime necessity in 1783; but "whatever measures have a tendency to dissolve the Union, or contribute to violate or lessen the sovereign authority, ought to be considered as hostile to the liberty and independency of America." The main purport of the circular was to obtain justice for the army; to urge the states to raise the money to discharge the pay-debts due the officers and men; to meet the expenses of the half-pay or commutation, which Washington denied was a pension, but "really was a reasonable compensation offered by Congress at a time when they had nothing else to give to officers of the army for the services then to be performed. . . . It was a part of their hire. . . . It was the price of their blood and your independency; it is therefore more than a common debt, it is a debt of honor."

The reward for the common soldier was an insistence upon all arrearages of pay and clothing to be made up, the land bounty and the gratuity of a full year's pay. This, Washington admitted, was as much and more than had been paid by any country in the world to the men in the ranks, but, Washington wrote, "Should a further reward, however be judged [e]quitable I will venture to assert that no one will enjoy greater satisfaction than myself." He strongly urged a pension for life for the disabled soldiers and again emphasized that the war could have been fought to victory in much less time and with much less expense "if the resources of the continent could have been properly drawn forth." He ended the circular with an earnest prayer for the protection of the state (to which the circular was addressed) and that God would "dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind . . . without" which "we can never hope to be a happy nation."⁴

Washington's earnest desire was to obtain justice for the army; it was a

partial fulfilment of his promise to the officers at Newburgh that as far as his powers in a constitutional way extended, he would help them to obtain that justice. The various governors replied with eulogistic acknowledgments of Washington's services and the various Legislatures passed complimentary resolves. In the Virginia Legislature, however, there were murmurs "against what is called the unsolicited obtrusion of his advice," which was the usual reaction of the small legislative mind, which resents having attention called to its laxity. But the chairman of the committee of the Continental Congress charged with the duty of drafting a proclamation for disbanding the army, did not think Washington's advice obtrusive and submitted the matter to him for suggestions. With a mixture of sentiment and practicality, in which his feeling for the army again became plain, Washington suggested a more definite and exact wording of the report at the vital point; and in the proclamation, he ventured that "Congress may, if they conceive the propriety in it . . . offer their thanks to the Army *generally*, for its long and faithful services." There were several other suggestions as to the officers, all of which were adopted by the committee and incorporated in the proclamation, which was issued October 18, 1783.

Washington's last General Orders to the army were issued from Rocky Hill, New Jersey, November 2, 1783. They were read to the remnant of the army at West Point and published in the newspapers of all the states, so that the furloughed officers and men could read them. After calling attention to the proclamation disbanding the army, the orders announced that "it only remains for the Commander in chief to address himself once more and for the last time, to the Armies of the United States (however widely dispersed the individuals who compose them may be), and to bid them an affectionate, a long farewell." Affectionate was the exact word, for George Washington appreciated to the full the honors the army had brought to him and his feeling for it was one of deep affection. The old soldiers who in after years tramped the long road from the highway to the Mount Vernon mansion, came back fully convinced of the sincerity of that word.

In these orders, Washington again expresses his conviction as to the war. "The disadvantageous circumstances of our part, under which the war was undertaken, can never be forgotten. The singular interpositions

of Providence in our feeble condition were such, as could scarcely escape the attention of the most unobserving; while the unparalleled perseverance of the armies of the United States; through almost every possible suffering and discouragement for the space of eight long years was little short of a standing miracle." He urged the men to go back into civil life with the most conciliating dispositions and to maintain the disciplined steadiness of conduct for which they were distinguished in camp; he acknowledged and thanked both officers and men for their assistance in carrying out the plans agreed upon. He thanked "the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers for their extraordinary patience and suffering as well as their invincible fortitude in action," and he closed the orders with the wish that ample justice be done them here and the "choicest of Heavens favors, both here and hereafter, attend those, who under the Divine Auspices have secured innumerable blessings for others." In Washington's moments of deep feeling his thought of life as a stage almost invariably comes to the fore; so in the last sentence of these last orders he reverted, subconsciously, too a favorite metaphor, in comparing the finish of the military side of the war to the last act of a play. He wrote that for the Commander-in-Chief: "The curtain of separation will soon be drawn and the military scene to him will be closed forever."

While the military scene was closing and Washington was urging the states to do justice to the army, he was compelled to urge Lund Washington, at Mount Vernon, to exert himself to secure some little justice for George Washington: "As my public business is now drawing to a close I cannot avoid looking towards my private concerns which do not wear the most smiling countenance."

He placed Mount Vernon "sincerely and heartily" at the service of George William Fairfax and his wife when they could come back to Virginia and rebuild Belvoir. He expressed a warm hope that they would again be neighbors, "and till you forbid me to indulge the wish I shall not despair of seeing you and Mrs. Fairfax once more inhabitants of Belvoir, and greeting you both there the intimate companions of our old age, as you have been of our younger years." The war, he wrote, was not premeditated, but the result of dire necessity because of the persecuting spirit of the British Government. He had been an attentive observer and witness in Congress of "those interesting and painful struggles for ac-

commodation and redress of grievances in a Constitutional way which all the world saw and must have approved, except the ignorant, deluded and designing." The opinion of the world, which meant to Washington the opinion of honest intelligent men everywhere, was a thing he valued. Entirely honest himself, he did not deny that honesty in the majority of men and his many and varied experiences had settled in his mind a knowledge of the many different sides there were to every question, and the need of honesty as the surest guide to proper decisions. The United States, he wrote Fairfax, was almost bound to commit errors at first and "like young heirs come a little prematurely perhaps to a large inheritance, it is more than probable they will riot for a while;" but they would work their own cure for he believed there was virtue at the bottom of the American character.⁵

A very personal matter drew from Washington a letter which illumines the calm, common sense of his mental processes. Lund Washington wrote that Nelly Calvert, the widow of John Parke Custis, was seeking advice as to a marriage with Dr. David Stuart and Washington replied that her own parents were nearer than he and the most proper to be consulted on such an occasion.

For my own part [he wrote] I never did nor do I believe I ever shall, give advice to a woman, who is setting out on a matrimonial voyage, first, because I never could advise one to marry without her own consent; and, secondly, because I know it is to no purpose to advise her to refrain, when she has obtained it. A woman very rarely asks an opinion or requires advice on such an occasion, till her resolution is formed; and then it is with the hope and expectation of obtaining a sanction, not that she means to be governed by your disapprobation, that she applies.⁶

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CHAPTER LXII

THE BRITISH EVACUATE NEW YORK—FAREWELL TO THE OFFICERS—RESIGNATION OF HIS COMMISSION

ARRANGEMENTS for the evacuation of New York by the British went on apace and Washington and Sir Guy Carleton met at Tappan to arrange for the final release of prisoners and to fix the details for taking over the city. The conference took longer than had been anticipated, Sir Guy became ill and on the second day General George Washington went on board the British frigate which had brought the English Commander-in-Chief up the Hudson. As the American Commander-in-Chief came over the side the ship's cannon boomed out a seventeen-gun salute to the "rebel" General. This was Carleton's courteous gesture, but it was the first time the British nation officially saluted the United States, and it was fitting that General George Washington should be the man to receive that salute. Other conferences were held before all matters were settled, but the day finally arrived when the last boat load of British troops pushed off from the old Battery wharf, as the Continentals marched down into Bowling Green.

Again a dinner at the public expense was given to the state and city officials, at Fraunces' Tavern, where Washington took up his quarters. The Tory element and feeling were not so noticeably present as they had been at the similar dinner given in 1775, when General George Washington arrived in New York on his way to Cambridge, but the exalted sovereignty of the state of New York was almost unnecessarily emphasized in the march of the army into the city when Governor George Clinton placed himself beside Washington, at the head of the troops.

There were many festivals and celebrations in New York, after the British evacuation, and it is regrettable that no clear record of them has survived. The day of Governor Clinton's public dinner, Washington entered in his accounts an item of having "sent out" a dinner of "16 Dishes," for which Samuel Fraunces charged him £8:16:0.

November thirtieth, Washington entertained at the Tavern in such wise that Fraunces' charge for the festivities was thirty-five pounds and on the night of December third, Major-General Henry Knox and his artillery officers managed a fireworks display, for which Washington complimented them highly the next day.

December fourth, the day Washington left New York for Annapolis, the officers gathered at Fraunces' Tavern to bid him farewell. The Commander-in-Chief's emotion at parting from these men, who had so ably assisted him in maneuvering the army to victory, and the country to independence, found utterance in a few words of deep feeling: "With a heart full of love and gratitude, I now take leave of you; I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." He added "I cannot come to each of you to take my leave, but shall be obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand." General Knox, being nearest, turned to him, when Washington grasped his hand, and embraced him. Each officer advanced and was embraced in turn and Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge is authority for the statement that there was not a dry eye in the room. When Washington left the Tavern, he passed between a double rank of light infantry drawn up at the door, and the officers fell in behind him in the short walk to the Whitehall Ferry slip, from whence a barge conveyed him to Powles Hook. From the barge the General waved a silent adieu to the officers, who as silently waved back, from where they stood upon the wharf, until the barge could no longer be seen.

The last scene was enacted at the state-house in Annapolis. Here again the Continental Congress had meticulously arranged all the details of the ceremony in advance and Washington tendered his commission to the President of Congress, who remained seated. It was perfectly proper, perfectly correct, that the General of the armies should stand while the President of the civil power remained seated, but despite the symbolism of this demonstration of the superiority of the civil over the military, it was perfectly plain then, as it is now, that the man who stood and resigned his commission was a greater power than that represented by the man who received it seated. Washington resigned, he said, "with satisfaction an appointment I accepted with diffidence." He expressed his obligations to the army and his gratitude for the support he had received from Congress and his countrymen. He had finished the work assigned

to him and he retired "from the great theatre of action." Here was the stage again!

Thomas Mifflin, of Pennsylvania, was then president of the Congress, the same Mifflin who had been Washington's first aide-de-camp and later one of the infamous Conway Cabal, yet it is probable that by 1783 and on this occasion, Mifflin was no longer jealous of Washington's fame, though the draft of his reply to Washington's address shows it to be the work of James McHenry, who was then a delegate to Congress from Maryland, and whose respect and admiration for the General were boundless. The most important sentence in President Mifflin's reply was the statement that Washington had "conducted the great military contest with wisdom and fortitude, invariably regarding the rights of the civil power through all disasters and changes." And McHenry is not above suspicion of having deliberately formulated this statement as a slap at Congress for, having served at headquarters as an aide-de-camp, he was keenly aware of the needless difficulties that civil power had so often created for Washington.

The day preceding the audience with Congress, a grand ball was given at the state-house, by the Maryland Legislature, at which Washington gratified the wish of all the ladies present by dancing with each one in turn, which has been quaintly described by an eye-witness as having been done so that each fair admirer "could get the touch of him."

On Christmas Eve, he set out from Annapolis and reached his beloved Mount Vernon that same day. His aides, Benjamin Walker, David Cobb and David Humphreys, rode with him and their presence added to the gaiety of the Christmas festivities. In Philadelphia Washington had purchased toys and books and other Christmas gewgaws for the Custis children, and the Christmas of 1783 at Mount Vernon was a merry and happy one. A few days later the three aides took their departure for their respective homes; Walker to New York, Cobb and Humphreys to Connecticut. Washington, thoughtful to the last, handed each one of them one hundred dollars to defray their traveling expenses. They mounted their horses and trotted down the private road toward the Alexandria turnpike. At the gate they pulled up their mounts to look back across the snow-covered lawn, and it seems most fitting that the last picture of the Revolutionary War should be that of these three aides-de-camp, in faded Continental uniforms, waving farewell to the tall figure of the Commander-in-Chief framed in the doorway of Mount Vernon.

CHAPTER LXIII

CIVIL LIFE—FINANCES—MORE BOOKS—HUMOR

MOUNT VERNON was once more under the master's hand, but an unusually hard winter with ice and snow in abundance kept that hand idle until the end of February. Washington settled into the former plantation routine after some little difficulty, for the habits of eight years as the head of an army could not be broken in a day. He quaintly described it in a letter to Knox after being at home a few weeks:

I am just beginning to experience that ease and freedom from public cares, which, however desirable, takes some time to realize; for strange as it may seem it is nevertheless true that it was not until lately I could get the better of my usual custom of ruminating as soon as I waked in the morning, on the business of the ensuing day; and of my surprise at finding, after revolving many things in my mind that I was no longer a public man, nor had anything to do with public transactions.¹

The humility of Washington would be surprising if he had not given so many instances of his almost childlike faith in God's help to man when man's purpose was worthy. It was in the worthiness of the struggle for human liberty that George Washington forgot himself completely. Liberty achieved, Washington thought little of his share in the achievement and describes himself to Lafayette with sincerity of feeling:

At length I am become a private citizen, on the banks of the Potomac; and under the shadow of my own vine and my own figtree, free from the bustle of a camp and the busy scenes of public life, I am solacing myself with those tranquil enjoyments, of which the soldier . . . the statesman . . . and the courtier can have very little conception. I have not only retired from all public employments, but I am retiring within myself, and shall be able to view the solitary walk and tread the paths of private life, with a heartfelt satisfaction. Envious

of none I am determined to be pleased with all; and this my dear friend, being the order for my march, I will move gently down the stream of life, until I sleep with my fathers.²

This was a philosophy beyond the reach or recognition of any of those who had been his compeers during the Revolution. Only Benjamin Franklin could approach it in understanding. The Adamses, the Lees, Gates, Mifflin, Jefferson, all these and others, carried over with them from the war a greater or less amount of jealousy and conviction that the country did not appreciate their services to the extent they felt sure those services should be appreciated, and the fact that there was abundant evidence that the country appreciated George Washington's services did not tend to endear the General to these patriots.

But Washington himself did retain one prejudice and suspicion and that was a prejudice and suspicion of Great Britain. Willing as he was to exempt English individuals, the chicanery and double-dealing he had witnessed and experienced, to a greater or less degree, for over a score of years was not to be lightly forgotten because Britain had now acknowledged America's independence. His feeling was clearly expressed in a letter to Lafayette asking him to send from France a set of plated tableware "because I do not incline to send to England (from whence formerly I had all my Goods) for anything I can get upon tolerable terms elsewhere."³ As long as he lived George Washington was never quite free from suspicion of Britain.

By February the ice and snow which shut in Mount Vernon from the world showed signs of relaxing its grip and on the eleventh of the month, the earliest possible date, Washington set out for Fredericksburg to pay his respects to his mother. He was there until the fifteenth and entered in his account an item of ten guineas given her and £2:8 to a Miss Bensons as a gratuity for her care and attention to his mother.

The expense accounts tell very little of the home-life at Mount Vernon during the first months of 1784. Washington began the year with a cash account of £346:10 in bank notes, £106:3 in gold and 12/ in silver. There are a number of charity expenditures noted; and an outlay of £100 to his well-liked nephew, George Augustine Washington, for his West Indies trip in search of better health. In March he sold one hundred and sixty

barrels of flour at thirty-six shillings, a total of two hundred and eighty-eight pounds and eight pence, which was the beginning of the struggle to put Mount Vernon back on its financial feet; in April he collected one hundred and thirty-three pounds from his tenants and, later in the year, sold one hundred and sixty-two pounds, fifteen shillings and six pence worth of flour. It was a hard fight and though he gradually pushed the estate toward solvency in its current expenses, he was not able to recover any of the ground it had lost during the war.

There were two official settlements of General George Washington's expenses while Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. He submitted his first account to the Continental Treasury, July 1, 1783. The preliminary treaty of peace with Great Britain had then been signed and it was only a matter of waiting for the definitive, or final treaty and on the British arrangements for evacuating New York. Matters dragged on so that, by the time Washington was able to resign his commission and return to Mount Vernon, another six months had elapsed. From Mount Vernon Washington mailed his final accounts to the Comptroller December 28, 1783, the last expenditure being the three hundred dollars he advanced to his aides, Walker, Cobb and Humphreys, to meet their travel expenses back to their homes.

The total amount of money expended by Washington for the personal expenses of the Commander-in-Chief during eight and a half years of the war, from June, 1775, through December, 1783, was £20,433:16:9, which by Washington's reckoning of the dollar being worth six shillings at the end of 1783, made his actual specie expenditures, sixty-eight thousand, one hundred and ten dollars, a more than modest sum for the United States to pay for the services of George Washington in gaining its independence. Disregarding the specie value and the depreciation, two things which are very difficult for the twentieth century to estimate correctly, the bare statement that Washington's personal expenses for eight and a half years were less than two hundred thousand dollars still seems an amazingly small amount.⁴

There is another financial statement and, like his expense account, entirely in Washington's writing, which he drew up after he returned to Mount Vernon and before he was elected president, which has been unknown to his biographers. It is an entirely unconscious proof of the

dauntless patriotism of George Washington, and should stop for ever the smug, self-sufficient, small-souled critics, who delight in telling of their imagined discoveries of Washington's sharp business practises and careful guardianship of his dollars. This document is headed thus: "List of U. S. Loan Office Certificates payable in Virginia belonging to George Washington" and it shows that the said George Washington purchased Loan Office certificates in 1778, 1779 and 1780 to the amount of thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars.

Following this is a similar table of Loan Office certificates, which he had purchased payable in Maryland and these, during the years 1778, 1779 and 1780 amounted to twenty-five thousand two hundred and twenty dollars. There were some miscellaneous certificates payable at the United States Loan Office at Philadelphia and at the Virginia Treasurer's Office. Loan Office certificates were the same as the Liberty bonds of the World War and those who purchased them were lending their money to the government. The years 1778, 1779 and 1780 were the darkest and most critical years of the Revolution and if there was one man who knew the terrible weakness of the American situation better than any one else that man was General George Washington. Yet he lent his money to the nation at that time with a prodigality limited only by his means, and if any other American of the Revolution backed the forlorn hope of Independence with heart, mind, hand and purse, as did George Washington, he is yet to be discovered. This pouring of what was all his surplus wealth into the bottomless pit of the Revolution is the last evidence needed to convince those unfortunate Americans who need convincing, of George Washington's unselfish patriotism. The more this particular document is studied the more stupendous it becomes. On the face of it, Washington's so-called canny, financial sense becomes either that of the reckless gambler, or the patriot who backed his patriotism with every cent he could raise and who believed that financial ruin was of no consequence if liberty were lost. There is entered also in one of the columns of this remarkable paper, an estimate of the specie worth of the various certificates, which shrinks the hard money value of these sixty-two thousand dollars to about eight thousand. Another paper among the Washington manuscripts, shows that on March 31, 1785, Washington cashed in about one thousand dollars of his 1779 certificates; but when he presented the rest for payment still

remains to be settled. One thing is certain and that is that George Washington or any man who bought United States Loan Office certificates in those drab years of 1778 and 1779 was entitled to every cent those certificates could bring at any date thereafter.

In the snow-bound January and February of 1784, he wrote letters which show how, despite his separation from public affairs, he "ruminated" over the political situation of the nation.

The disinclination of the individual States to yield competent powers to Congress for the Federal Government, their unreasonable jealousy of that body and of one another and the disposition which seems to pervade each of being all wise and all powerful within itself, will if there is not a change in the system be our downfall as a nation. This is as clear to me as the A. B. C.; and I think we have opposed Great Britain and have arrived at the present state of peace and independency to very little purpose if we cannot conquer our own prejudices.⁵

He returned again to his plan of settling his western land by tenant farmers and looked carefully into the question of German Palatinates for that purpose. Already the idea of writing a biography of Washington or a history of the war had been seized upon by more than one person; but in response to requests for the use of his papers, Washington had but one reply to make. Any memoirs of his life, he declared "distinct and unconnected with the general history of the war would rather hurt my feelings than tickle my pride whilst I live. I had rather glide gently down the stream of live leaving it to posterity to think and say what it pleases of me, than by any act of mine to have vanity or ostentation imputed to me."⁶ To another request he advanced the objection that until Congress opened its files to the historian he could not permit access to his own papers. These papers had been carefully packed and carted from Rocky Hill, New Jersey, to Mount Vernon under the care of Captain Bezaleel Howe, the last commandant of the Commander-in-Chief's Guard and, after seeing them temporarily housed, Washington wrote in a semi-serious vein to Charles Thomson:

If my commission is not necessary for the files of Congress I should be glad to have it deposited among my own papers; it may

serve *my Grand Children* some fifty or an hundred years hence for a theme to ruminate upon, if they should be contemplatively disposed. We have been so fast locked up in snow and ice, since Christmas that all kinds of intercourse have been suspended. . . . I shall be ready to welcome my friends to the shadow of this Vine and Fig-tree where I hope it is unnecessary to add, I should be exceedingly happy to see you and any of *my late Masters*, the representatives in Congress.⁷

There is a suspicious glint of satire in those last underscored words, but it is the pleasant satire of a cheerful joke, like the underscored "Grand Children" which preceded it.

The circumscribed activity, brought about by the weather, brings forward more evidence that Washington was a bookish man. To Boinod & Gaillard, publishers of the *Courrier de L'Amerique*, the first French newspaper published in the United States, he expressed his conviction that "to encourage Literature and the Arts is a duty which every good citizen owes to his country and if I could be instrumental in promoting these and aiding your endeavor to do the like it would give me pleasure."⁸ He ordered from them some interesting books: *An Account of the New Northern Archipelago*, by William Strehlin, in eight volumes; *History of the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, by William Lothian; *A Review of the Characters of the Principal Nations of Europe*, in two volumes; *Hermes, or a Philosophical Enquiry, concerning Languages*; *The True French Master, or Rules for the French Tongue*, by M. Cheneau; *The New Pocket Dictionary of ye French and English Language*, by Thos. Nugent, two volumes; *A Course of Gallantries translated from the French of M. Duclos*; *The Rise, Progress and Present State of the Northern Governments*, by J. Williams, two volumes.

The French language books ordered show that he was still amusing himself with the idea that perhaps, after all, he might arrange to visit France; though by April, 1784, his letter to the Marchioness de Lafayette shows conclusively the end of the dream.

The state of Pennsylvania and, later, the Continental Congress considered the proposition of an endowment to Washington to enable him to meet more easily the entertainment expenses of Mount Vernon which, it was rightfully supposed, would be heavy because of Washington's fame; but he politely opposed this idea and the matter was dropped.⁹

His visit to Fredericksburg had an unexpected result through which we are indebted for a picture of Washington's financial status at this time. Young Fielding Lewis wrote for a loan and Washington replied (February twenty-seventh) that he had "made no money from my Estate during the nine years I was absent from it and brought none home with me. Those who owed me, for the most part, took advantage of the depreciation and paid me off with six pence in the pound, those to whom I was indebted, I have yet to pay, without other means, if they will not wait, than selling part of my Estate; or distressing those who were too honest to take advantage of the tender Laws to quit scores with me." This was, as he had written to George William Fairfax, the preceding year, that his (Washington's) business affairs were in "a state of torpidity or suspension except in the instances of having money paid to me at the depreciated value." His correspondence, usually upon sober matters, does not often display this lighter touch for there were few opportunities to encourage it; yet, now and again a bit of dry humor crops up. The few letters which have survived in which he intentionally adopted the lighter vein are not brilliantly humorous, but they are cheerfully pleasing. Judged by the standard of the humor of the eighteenth century in America they are not failures and it can be stated with some confidence that there are more examples of honest humor in George Washington's letters than can be found in those of Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton or any one of the Fathers except Benjamin Franklin. There is, too, a most satisfying extract extant from the letter of a Virginia lady who wrote from camp in 1777 to her friend, that when "General Washington throws off the Hero and takes up the chatty agreeable Companion, he can be downright impudent sometimes, such impudence, Fanny, as you and I like."

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CHAPTER LXIV

POTOMAC NAVIGATION—HOUDON'S STATUE—FRENCH HOUNDS AND THE SPANISH JACKASS—THE ALEXANDRIA ACADEMY

THE latter part of the year 1784 marked the last one of George Washington's frontier journeys, for on the first day of September, he set out, on horseback, with Dr. James Craik and Bushrod Washington to visit his tenants in Berkeley County and to traverse a part of the western country in furtherance of the plan of the inland navigation of the Potomac.

He collected something over sixty pounds of the amount long owing to him in rents and also a vast amount of conflicting information about routes and distances from the west to the Virginia tide-water. At Berkeley Springs he arranged with James Rumsey to build him a house and stable and witnessed a demonstration of Rumsey's mechanical boat, with which he was much pleased because of the simplicity of its works, "as they may be made by a common boat builder or carpenter, and kept in order as easy as a plow." He gave Rumsey a certificate of his opinion; but that inventor, a little later, dropped the mechanical feature and worked out an application of steam power.

From Berkeley, Washington traveled up into Pennsylvania to investigate the affairs of his tenants, his mill and copartnership with Gilbert Simpson. This situation was unsatisfactory in every way. The certificates of indebtedness he was forced to take from his tenants were long unpaid and Simpson settled his account with Washington in depreciated currency. A number of the tenants disputed Washington's title to the land and declared they would stand suit to determine their rights.

News coming that the Indians on the Ohio were restless and in an ugly mood, Washington gave up his intention of going out to the Kanawha country and returned home three weeks sooner than he expected. On the homeward journey there were many rains which kept the bushes continually wet "the passing of which, under these circumstances was very little

better than swimming of Rivers.”²¹ He reached Mount Vernon October fourth “having travelled on the same horses since the first day of September, by the computed distances 680 Miles.”²²

He then sat him down to sum up the situation as to the Potomac being the easiest and best navigation out of the western country to the Atlantic seaboard and wrote pages and pages of diary, basing his conclusions on the information he had obtained and checking results on the available maps.

This long written discussion fixed the matter in Washington’s mind, but it had a greater value in that it unconsciously clarified what was destined to prove a very awkward diplomatic situation, for the United States and President George Washington, some ten years later.

The year of 1785 seems to have been one of unalloyed enjoyment for George Washington, for he spent all of his time, thought and energy upon Mount Vernon. He cleared and planted to his heart’s content, laid out the serpentine walk in front of the house, searched diligently for rare trees, shrubs and bushes with which to beautify the landscape and filled the measure of his outside interest with developing the plan of the Potomac navigation, which next to Mount Vernon, lay nearest his heart.

The Great Falls of the Potomac, Seneca and Shenandoah Falls saw him on their banks, examining and planning. He went down the main channel of the Shenandoah in a canoe and intended to pass through the Spout, as it was called, but was dissuaded by other directors of the company who feared an accident, from the low sides of the canoe and roughness of the water. Two days later, having obtained a light boat and hired two oarsmen, “we passed through the Spout and all the other falls and rapids.”²³

But for all the quiet tenor of the peaceful days at Mount Vernon, the year was somewhat exciting and marked by some interesting happenings. The English painter, Robert Edge Pine, came and painted Washington’s portrait and although this portrait has little to commend it, Washington’s letter to Francis Hopkinson, from whom Pine presented a letter of introduction, gives us another of the valuable, friendly, unrestrained compositions:

In for a penny, in for a pound, is an old adage. I am so hackneyed to the touches of the painter’s pencils, that I am now altogether at their beck; and sit “like Patience on a monument” whilst they are

delineating the lines of my face. It is a proof, among many others, of what habit and custom can accomplish. At first I was as impatient of the request and as restive under the operation as a colt is of the saddle. The next time I submitted very reluctantly, but with less flouncing. Now no dray horse moves more readily to his thill than I to the painter's chair.

Jean Antoine Houdon, the French sculptor, commissioned by the state of Virginia to carve a life-size figure of Washington for the state, arrived with his assistants at Mount Vernon one October night, after the family had retired, and stayed nearly three weeks. Curiously, Washington became more interested in Houdon's preparation of the plaster of Paris, with which he preserved his modeling, than in the portraiture itself and for a long time thereafter used the pulverized plaster in experimental fertilizing.⁴

Another excitement was the arrival of Samuel Vaughan's white and Sienite marble mantel from London, and its agricultural carvings must have brought deep pleasure to the Master of Mount Vernon. Vaughan was a stranger, but a great admirer of Washington, and his gift was a sincere tribute, as frankly accepted as it was made. The mantel as set in place with its marble hearth, supporting columns and ornaments is the one thing in Mount Vernon that is to-day exactly as it was in Washington's lifetime.

The mantel had been some time in place and the French sculptor was still at Mount Vernon when, on October fifteenth, "After the Candles were lighted George Auge. Washington and Francis Bassett were married." Some months before Washington had written to his old friend, Colonel Burwell Bassett, of this contemplated union:

It has ever been a maxim with me through life, neither to promote nor to prevent a matrimonial connection, unless there should be something indispensably requiring interference in the latter, I have always considered marriage as the most interesting event of one's life, the foundation of happiness or misery. To be instrumental therefore in bringing two people together, who are indifferent to each other, and may soon become objects of disgust; or to prevent a union which is prompted by the affections of the mind, is what I never could reconcile with reason, and therefore neither directly nor indirectly

have I ever said a word to Fannie or George upon the subject of their intended connection, but as their attachment to each other seems of early growth, warm and lasting, it bids fair for happiness. If therefore you have no objection, I think the sooner it is consummated the better.

This philosophy of marriage being the most interesting event in life and the foundation of happiness or misery could certainly not have been weakened in George Washington by his own venture with Martha Custis. In the light of this, the strained interpretations placed upon Washington's so-called love-affairs are absurd.

In the summer the Mount Vernon kennels were excited by the arrival of seven French hounds, a gift through the Marquis de Lafayette, of a French nobleman, whose name the Marquis wrote in such a way that Washington could not decipher it. These hounds were brought over to America by young John Quincy Adams who, not being a dog enthusiast, handled the matter in a way which failed to arouse Washington's hearty approval. To these French hounds may be attributed Washington's resumption of fox-hunting for to a man of fifty-three who had spent the previous eight years in the saddle and often upon the battle-field, the zest of riding to hounds after a fox could not then have held an over-great appeal. These hunts did, however, furnish another pleasing glimpse of Washington's sportsmanship, which he records in the usual prosaic matter-of-fact diary record. The day before Christmas Eve a holiday fox-hunt was held with eight gentlemen riders, and after an early breakfast a fox was put up which led them a hard ride of an hour and a quarter before the brush took to a hollow tree. They fastened him in the tree; put up another fox and killed him after an hour and thirteen minutes' run. They then came back to the tree-holed fox and after allowing him a start of "half an hour put the Dogs upon his Trail and in half a Mile he took to another hollow tree and was again put out of it but he did not go 600 yards before he had recourse to the same shift; finding therefore that he was a conquered Fox we took the Dogs off, and came home to Dinner."⁵

The real event of the barnyard and stables was the arrival of a Spanish jackass, the gift from the King of Spain. There was more to this than the mere gift of a breeding Jack, pedigreed though the animal was. Washington had expressed an interest in introducing a good breed of jacks in

America and the Spanish Premier had at once grasped a diplomatic opportunity. The question of the navigation of the Mississippi River would sooner or later become a matter of importance to Spain, and although the Spaniard could not clearly foresee the exact developments, he did foresee that as long as George Washington lived, George Washington's opinion would be a force in America. So, with the Mississippi River in mind, Washington's interest in jackasses was laid before his Catholic Majesty with certain suggestions.

By Spanish law, breeding jackasses could not be exported, but a royal order was issued to send two of the best breeding jacks to Washington as a gift from his Majesty. Only one of the jacks survived the voyage. On his arrival at Mount Vernon he was inspected and measured on the veranda of the Mansion House and promptly and fittingly dubbed "Royal Gift." Handsome and valuable as he was, he weighed not a feather in the settlement of the Mississippi navigation negotiation when Washington was president of the United States.

There are many engaging little details in the entire story of Royal Gift but one, the most engaging of all, is Washington's kindness to Pedro Tellez, the Spanish groom who brought the jack from Spain and who could not speak a word of English. Washington would have kept him at Mount Vernon, but the Spaniard wanted to return to Spain, so with money and a certificate, Washington sent him to the Spanish Minister at New York. It does not require much imagination to picture the swarthy Spaniard presenting with an ingratiating smile this note:

The Bearer of this, Pedro Tellez is the Spaniard who was sent from Bilboa with one of the Jack Asses, which was presented to me by His Catholic Majesty, and is on his journey to New York, to the Minister of Spain, with a view of returning to his own country from thence. Not being able to speak any language but that of his native tongue, it is requested as a favor of the good people on the road to assist and direct him properly; which will be considered as an obligation conferred on Go: Washington.

Washington's birth-month in 1785 saw his scotching of that long persistent story of his being a marshal of France. He wrote to Æneas Lamon, who had so credited him in a printed statement, which probably is

largely responsible for the continuance of the myth: "It behoves me to correct a mistake in your printed address to the patrons of the fine Arts. I am not a Marshall of France, nor do I hold any Commission, or fill any Office under that Government," and he then added, seemingly with much satisfaction, "or any other whatever."

Yet he could not refrain from expressing his emphatic opinion in matters of government, whenever he saw exhibited political or other prejudices which were detrimental to the public welfare. On the proposed religious assessment bill in Virginia in 1785, Washington expressed an idea, and like so many of his ideas, it can profitably be borne in mind by the United States at all periods. He wished the bill could have been allowed to die an easy death "because I think it will be productive of more quiet to the state than by enacting it into a law, which in my opinion would be impolitic, admitting there is a decided majority for it, to the disquiet of a respectable minority. In the former case the matter will soon subside; in the latter it will rankle and perhaps convulse the State." This, regardless of the subject, is a clear understanding of the inherent weakness of the so-called majority rule, which even before the adoption of the United States Constitution, was clearly grasped by George Washington.

The record of the year 1785 appropriately closed on a note of educational interest. Washington withdrew his two nephews, George Steptoe and Lawrence Washington, from the Reverend Stephen Bloomer Balch's Academy in Georgetown, on account of the expense, largely due to Mr. Balch's failure to keep the boys under proper discipline, and placed them in the Alexandria Academy, of which Washington was one of the trustees. A short while after this change was made Washington offered to vest in the trustees, when they were permanently established by charter, one thousand pounds, the interest only of which was "to be applied towards the establishment of a charity school for the education of Orphan and other poor Children." He found himself embarrassed and unable to advance the one thousand pounds when the Academy was incorporated, and compromised by paying fifty pounds annually, the endowment to be arranged in his will. By that instrument he devised to the trustees twenty shares in the Bank of Alexandria, then worth four thousand dollars.

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CHAPTER LXV

FEDERALISM—SHAYS' REBELLION—SLAVERY—MOUNT VERNON AND HIS MOTHER—LAFAYETTE

AS TIME went on and the weaknesses of the Confederation became more apparent daily, Washington wrote vigorously upon the necessity of the states giving power to the central government. His federalism was the fruit of the hard bitter experiences which lack of a central governmental power had imposed upon him. No beautiful theory or logical argument of balance of power or states rights could weigh against the recollections of the hunger and cold of Valley Forge, the skeleton army of Trenton or the heart-breaking inability to cooperate with the French Allies in 1780; all caused by the lack of this selfsame central power.

"To me," he wrote James Warren (October 7, 1785), "it is a solecism in politics, indeed it is one of the most extraordinary things in Nature, that we should confederate as a nation, and yet be afraid to give the rulers of that nation who are the creatures of our making . . . sufficient powers to order and direct the affairs of the same.

"We are either a united people or we are not so," he wrote to James Madison (November 30, 1785) with his quick jealousy for the nation's honor: "If the former let us in all matter of the general concern act as a nation with a national character to support."

It is not too easy for us in the fourth decade of the twentieth century, when the trend seems decidedly in favor of increasing centralization, to comprehend fully this lack of federal power in the next to the last decade of the eighteenth century. But George Washington felt a serious and personal responsibility for the honor of a government to which he was so largely instrumental in bringing liberty. His general idea of the situation is shown in his letter to John Jay, of May eighteenth:

I coincide perfectly in sentiment with you, my dear Sir, that there are errors in our national government, which call for correction;

loudly I may add; but I shall find myself happily mistaken if the remedies are at hand. We are certainly in a delicate situation; but my fear is that the people are not yet sufficiently *misled* to retract from error. To be plainer, I think there is more wickedness than ignorance mixed with our councils. Under this impression I scarcely know what opinion to entertain of a general convention. That it is necessary to revise and amend the articles of confederation, I entertain no doubt; but what may be the consequences of such an attempt is doubtful. Yet something must be done, or the fabric must fall, for it certainly is tottering.

The insufficiency of the Articles of Confederation had become increasingly manifest with the economic strains put upon them after the driving necessities of the war had been removed, and though the idea of a convention of the people to revise the Articles arose in several parts of the United States it is curious to note how its development centered around Washington without his being at all aware of this trend. Entirely apart from all discussion of a convention, the matter of the navigation of the Potomac became the channel which led to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787. Virginia, before the Revolution, had thoughtlessly yielded jurisdiction over the Potomac to Maryland, reserving only the right of free navigation. Afterward this was seen to have been a mistake, and in 1784, on motion of James Madison, the Virginia Legislature proposed the appointment of commissioners from the two states to frame regulations to govern the commerce of the river, which developed naturally into the question of the commerce of the Chesapeake Bay. These commissioners, of whom Washington was one, met in Annapolis in December, 1784; from here the commission adjourned to meet in Alexandria, in March, 1785. This meeting developed in such wise that Washington, though he did not continue as one of the commissioners, invited them to his home, where for several days informal discussions were held in the library of Mount Vernon. The matter was seen to involve more than a question of inland waterways between two states. Was Maryland to have a set of regulations for her water-borne commerce with Virginia, and a different set for her relations with Delaware and Pennsylvania, which touched her on the north? And was Virginia to have a set of regulations with Maryland and a different set with North Carolina, whose Albe-

marle Sound waters were so close to her southern boundary? If the same regulations were to govern in both cases, certainly Delaware, Pennsylvania and North Carolina must agree, and as yet they had not been asked. The reports of the commissioners to their states were full, but Maryland, after a time, suggested to Virginia the advisability of a convention of all the states. Virginia acted at once and issued a call to the states to send delegates to a convention, to be held at Annapolis the first Monday in September of 1786. Here was the train of events which began with a variant of George Washington's pet project of the navigation of his beloved Potomac, circled around through Annapolis and Alexandria, to the library of Mount Vernon and from there developed into a call for the Annapolis Convention. This duly met, canvassed the situation, decided that it was too big to be properly handled by anything less than a full representation of all the states and issued the call for the convention which met in Philadelphia in 1787. With George Washington in the chair, the convention created the document that became the Constitution of the United States of America. Curiously, too, George Washington was not a member of the commission which discussed those matters at Mount Vernon, was not a member of the Annapolis Convention, and went to Philadelphia under protest and with no very great amount of enthusiasm. It was another piece of serious hard work and Washington had had enough of serious hard work. He did not and could not know that the door he thought had safely closed, was slowly swinging open, and that again he would have to pass through once more to give his time, labor and thought to public matters, when he wanted nothing so much as to be left in peace and quiet at Mount Vernon, to work out his agricultural experiments and develop his farms to their highest productivity.

In Massachusetts the inefficiency, mismanagement, greed and profiteering during the Revolution had brought about a condition of financial stringency, unequal taxation and imposition of hardships upon farmers. The courts were no longer dependable dispensers of justice and many of the grievances of 1786 have a familiar sound. The growing unrest found a leader in the person of Captain Daniel Shays, a fiery Irishman and Revolutionary War veteran, whose recognition of injustice was more virile than that of the Massachusetts Legislature and whose personal energy ran far ahead of Puritan conservatism. The Legislature did finally pass

three different laws for easing the burdens of the people, but the spirit of revolt had moved more swiftly and the outburst came before the legal easement could be felt. The news of Shays' Rebellion, as it was called, reached Washington in October of 1786 and drew from him a letter of shocked amazement, to his old aide, David Humphreys: "For God's sake tell me what is the cause of these commotions? Do they proceed from licentiousness, British influence disseminated by the Tories, or real grievances which admit of redress?" (Here is Washington's never slumbering suspicion of Great Britain.) "If the latter," he went on to say, "why were they delayed until the public mind had become so agitated? If the former, why are not the powers of government tried at once? It is as well to live without as not live under their exercise." And to Henry Lee he wrote more strongly: "I am mortified beyond expression when I view the clouds that have spread over the brightest morn that ever dawned upon any country"; which is a picture of Washington's idea of the experiment of democratic government in a world of monarchical principle. "You talk my good sir, of employing influence to appease the present tumults in Massachusetts. I know not where that influence is to be found, or, if attainable, that it would be a proper remedy for the disorders. *Influence is no government.* Let us have one by which our lives, liberties and properties will be secured, or let us know the worst at once. Under these impressions my humble opinion is that there [is] a call for decision. Know precisely what the insurgents aim at. If they have *real* grievances, redress them if possible; or acknowledge the justice of them, and your inability to do it at the present moment. If they have not, employ the force of government against them at once."

It would be helpful for statesmen of all times, to commit to memory the entire letter of which this is but a brief extract, for the essence of democracy is to be found in it. "Influence is no government!" Grievances, if real, to be acknowledged and every practical step taken to redress them. Here is no lust of power, no belief that rebellion is to be put down at once with a strong hand. George Washington had been too recently a rebel himself to have forgotten that sometimes rebellion against constituted authority may be more right than the constituted authority itself. Justice was more important with him than power. But if the rebellion was not justified, then he would use power to the utmost to suppress it and at once.

Every violation of the Constitution, he said, was to be reprehended. If the Constitution was defective, "let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled upon whilst it has an existence."¹

The order in which he placed the three important things should be noted. First life, then liberty and last property. But he wished everything assayed to prevent the effusion of blood "and to avert the humiliating and contemptible figure we are about to make in the annals of mankind."²

Shays' Rebellion convinced Washington of the necessity of the proposed convention for altering the form of the national government. "Laws and ordinances unobserved, or partially attended to, had better never have been made; because the first is a mere nihil, and the second is productive of much jealousy and discontent."³ But when Shays' Rebellion was suppressed with so little bloodshed Washington was delighted, though he wrote to General Lincoln that more leniency would have produced an equally good effect "without entirely alienating the affections of a people from the government; as it now stands it [the disfranchising act of the Massachusetts Legislature] affects a large body of men, some of them, perhaps deprived of the means of gaining a livelihood; the friends and connections of these people will feel themselves wounded in a degree and I think it will rob the state of a number of its inhabitants, if it produces nothing more."⁴

As the months went by, Washington became acquiescent to the idea of attending the convention at Philadelphia and in this the urging of his friends had great weight. But before the time arrived, he was called upon to express an opinion on the question of slavery, which is worth recording and comparing with his more cautious statement, made later, when he was president. An Alexandrian was forced to go to Philadelphia to recover a slave which the Philadelphia Quakers were attempting to liberate. Washington wrote to Robert Morris rather plainly, of the injustice of compelling a man to defend his slave property in such wise. "I hope it will not be conceived from these observations," Washington wrote, "that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people, who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say that there is not a man living, who wishes more sincerely than I do to see the plan adopted for the abolition of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished and this by legislative authority; and this, is as far as my suf-

frage will go, shall never be wanting." But when practises like the ones involved in this case were permitted they produced discontent and resentment and became "oppression in such a case, and not humanity in any, because it introduces more evils than it can cure."⁵

Some petitions for the abolition of slavery had been presented to the Virginia Legislature but they scarcely obtained a reading, and Washington felt that to set the matter afloat at that time would be productive of mischief. "But, by degrees it certainly might, and assuredly ought to be effected," was the way he expressed it a month later to Lafayette.⁶ He summed it up to John Francis Mercer in September: "I never mean (unless some particular circumstances should compel me to it) to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by slow, sure and imperceptible degrees." This is a far cry from the fanatic reformer who insisted upon cutting out the cancer, with little thought and less care whether the patient survived or not, and who, finally, was largely instrumental in plunging the country into civil war over the fate of three million blacks. Washington was wise enough to see that slavery had fastened its tentacles so deeply into the nation that it could be successfully abolished only by slow degrees; and he wished those degrees to be sure ones.

In this same letter to Mercer all unconsciously he gives the lie to the charges that have been leveled against him in later generations, of having bought up the military certificates of soldiers, in declining a suggestion or offer of Mercer's: "I never did, nor never intend to purchase a military certificate."⁷

The strains of the war were beginning to tell upon Washington's constitution and the unavoidable exposures to intemperate weather fastened upon him the painful curse of a rheumatic shoulder, which plagued him so often through the last six months of the year 1786 that at times he was scarcely able to raise his hand to his head, or turn over in his bed; indeed for some days he was compelled to carry his arm in a sling.⁸ Yet this pain does not appear to have interfered with the Christmas jollity at Mount Vernon in 1786, which he touched upon in his letter to his old aide-de-camp, David Humphreys, the day after the feast-day, regretting that Humphreys could not have been present "in the attack of Christmas pies. We had one yesterday on which all the company tho' pretty numerous,

were hardly able to make an impression." This Christmas pie must have been a huge and glorious one and mayhap such grandeurs of the oven were a recognized part of the Mount Vernon Christmas festivities. Along with this great Christmas pie may be recorded another little whimsy of the Master of Mount Vernon, which doubtless gave him as quiet a laugh as it gives to us to-day. Philip Bater had been employed as a gardener at Mount Vernon and had been discharged for his bibulous habits; but he seems to have been a good gardener and a likable man, so when he again applied for a position, Washington gravely drew up a year's contract in which Bater was not at any time to "suffer himself to be disguised with liquor, except on the times hereafter mentioned . . . four Dollars at Christmas, with which he may be drunk 4 days and 4 nights; two Dollars at Easter to effect the same purpose; two Dollars also at Whitsuntide, to be drunk two days; A Dram in the Morning and a drink of Grog at Dinner or at Noon."

It was well for Washington that he could find in the happy gaieties at Mount Vernon, an antidote for worry, for his finances were in a far from flourishing condition. When his mother sent him word that she needed money, he sent her all the cash he had by him at the time, fifteen guineas, though he ought, he plaintively assured her, have paid it "many days ago to another, agreeable to my own assurances." He owed more than five hundred pounds, three hundred and forty of which were for the taxes of 1786 and there was nothing in sight with which to meet them. In the last two years he had made no crops and those who owed him money could not or would not pay. The picture he drew for his mother of his financial condition was not, he stated, an excuse for "not paying you what may be really due; for let this be little or much I am willing, however unable, to pay to the utmost farthing; but it is really hard upon me when you have taken everything you wanted from the Plantation by which money could be raised, when I have not received one farthing directly or indirectly from the place for more than twelve years, and when in that time I have paid, as appears by Mr. Lund Washington's accounts against me (during my absence) Two hundred and sixty odd pounds, and by my own account Fifty odd pounds out of my own pocket to you. . . . Who is to blame or whether any body is to blame for these things I know not, but there are the facts."

The situation was irksome and Washington justly desired to have nothing more to do with the Rappahannock plantation. He advised his mother to let young Bushrod Washington manage the farm at a reasonable rent or let him take over the land completely at a yearly rent, and that Mary Washington go to live with one of her children. John Augustine Washington was to have tried to persuade his mother to live with him; but he had died and only three other children were left, Charles, Betty (Lewis) and George. "My house," wrote George, "is at your service and would press you most sincerely and most devoutly to accept it, but I am sure and candor requires me to say, it will never answer your purposes in any shape whatsoever. For in truth," he wrote a little bitterly, "it may be compared to a well resorted tavern, as scarcely any strangers who are going from north to south, or from south to north, do not spend a day or two at it. This would, were you to be an inhabitant of it, oblige you to do one of 3 things: 1st, to be always dressing to appear in company; 2d, to come into the room in dishabille, or 3d, to be as it were a prisoner in your own chamber. The first you'd not like; indeed for a person at your time of life it would be too fatiguing. The 2d, I should not like because those who resort here are, as I observed before, strangers and people of the first distinction. And the 3d, more than probably, would not be pleasing to either of us. Nor indeed could you be retired in any room in my house; for what with the sitting up of company, the noise and bustle of the servants, and many other things, you would not be able to enjoy that calmness and serenity of mind, which in my opinion you ought now to prefer to every other consideration in life." Washington then went on to outline the method by which she could reduce her expenses and establish her income so as to be eased of all care and trouble. Washington's position was most difficult; he again plaintively remarked that he was "viewed as a delinquent, and considered perhaps by the world as an unjust and undutiful son," under the strain of advancing three hundred to four hundred pounds to meet his mother's plantation expenses, the entire income of which was also appropriated to his mother's use, when a portion of it should have been his from the rental understanding. It was a situation of financial waste which increased Washington's difficulties in meeting his mother's demands, without any corresponding benefit to her.

Life at Mount Vernon was a busy one at all times; bricks were made

for the unceasing building activities, the flagstones of the piazza were renewed, surveying and marking off of fields, ditching and fencing, plowing and planting, cutting hay and gathering crops kept every one busy. Washington devised and built a barrel machine for regular planting, and after some experimenting brought it to the point of working with fairly satisfactory accuracy. The amount of grain seed in the barrel controlled the flow; when the barrel was full the seed fell slowly and as the supply diminished the flow was greater. He did not quite succeed in regulating this but the general result more than repaid the effort.

In 1786 there were some interesting days at Mount Vernon. An English farmer, James Bloxham, was hired and took charge of the general farm work. Washington had a rather severe attack of the fever and ague, which took severe doses of Jesuit bark (quinine) to conquer. The great event of this year, like 1785, was the arrival, in November, of a jack and two jennies from the island of Malta. These were a gift from the Marquis de Lafayette. This jack was a more slender and graceful animal than the huge Royal Gift, and Washington, who promptly named him "The Knight of Malta," had visions of this being the beginning of a breed of fine mules in the United States. He thought of crossing the strains and using the beasts in which the heavy characteristics of Royal Gift predominated for farm and draft work, and the lighter Knight of Malta strain for carriage work. He had fully made up his mind to this and determined to drive nothing but mules in his carriage. The economy of upkeep and the great working power of the mule, much exceeding that of the horse, impressed Washington as a worth-while experiment. No one who has ever noticed the fine mules of the United States Army can doubt that George Washington's idea was a correct one. There is a very pretty story woven around the Knight of Malta. Despite his efforts Washington could never obtain from Lafayette any statement of expense and the Marquis, foreseeing a possible stubborn insistence on the question of payment, deliberately refrained from stating that the animals were a gift. Washington duly entered the Knight of Malta and the two jennies under an account opened in Lafayette's name, in his ledger accounts, leaving the amount blank; and blank it stayed for many years until Lafayette was seized and thrown into prison by Austria. Then, in addition to the strong letters which Washington wrote in the effort to obtain his release, he sent the Marchioness de

Lafayette an hundred guineas; in return, he wrote her, for services done for him by the Marquis and for which no account had ever been rendered.⁹

The letter to the Emperor of Germany, pleading for Lafayette, is one that exhibits unusual diplomatic finesse:

It will readily occur to your Majesty, that occasions may sometimes exist, on which official considerations would constrain the Chief of a Nation to be silent and passive, in relation even to objects which affect his sensibility, and claim his interposition as a man. Finding myself precisely in this situation at present, I take the liberty of writing this *private* Letter to your Majesty; being persuaded, that my motives will also be my apology for it.

In common with the people of this Country, I retain a strong and cordial sense of the services tendered to them by the Marquis de la Fayette; and my friendship for him has been constant and sincere. It is natural, therefore, that I should sympathize with him and his family in their misfortunes, and endeavour to mitigate the calamities which they experience; among which his present confinement is not the least distressing.

I forebear to enlarge on this delicate subject. Permit me only to submit to your Majesty's consideration, whether his long imprisonment, and the confiscation of his Estate and the Indigence and dispersion of his family, and the painful anxieties incident to all these circumstances, do not form an assemblage of sufferings, which recommend him to the mediation of *Humanity*? Allow me, Sir! on this occasion to be its organ; and to entreat that he may be permitted to come to this Country on such conditions and under such restrictions, as your Majesty may think it expedient to prescribe.

As it is a maxim with me not to ask what under similar circumstances, I would not grant, your Majesty will do me the justice to believe, that this request appears to me to correspond with those great principles of magnanimity and wisdom, which form the Basis of sound Policy and durable Glory.

May the almighty and merciful Sovereign of the universe keep your Majesty under his protection and guidance.¹⁰

The last sentence is more than mere form; it is a clever reminder that there exists a power greater than emperors, to which crowned heads eventually have to look for mercy in their turn.

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CHAPTER LXVI

THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION—PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN MAY, 1787, Washington set out for Philadelphia to attend the sessions of the convention called to consider the Articles of Confederation, which performed its work in such wise that it has been known, ever since, as the Constitutional Convention. On the first day's journey, Washington was seized with a violent headache and sick stomach, but he recovered quickly and pushed on, reaching Philadelphia on the fifth day. He traveled in his carriage and was escorted into the city by the Philadelphia troop of light horses, while the bells chimed out a welcome.

On May twenty-fifth, Washington was elected president of the Convention, which was in session from May fourteenth to September seventeenth. In that time Washington attended church twice: May twenty-seventh he "went to the Romish Church, to high mass" and June seventeenth "Went to Church. Heard Bishop White preach, and see him ordain two Gentlemen Deacons." The diary entry of June first records that "Attending in Convention and nothing being suffered to transpire, no minutes of the proceedings has been, or will be inserted in this diary." We are, of course, tremendously grateful to Madison, Paterson and the others who disregarded the restriction which they themselves voted, by which means, many years afterward, America was enabled to find out how its Constitution had been created. But beyond question, Madison and the others were not strictly honorable in keeping the records they did of the proceedings. It would have been a boon to history to have Washington's record and comment upon these proceedings; but an agreement of secrecy meant just that to George Washington; he did not temporize and it is, somehow, highly satisfactory that he did not. Though he did not record any of the proceedings of the Convention, he did, however, keep a record of his social activities during that period which furnishes one or two flashes of interesting character color. One was his visit to John Bartram's botanical garden

"which, tho' stored with many curious plts. shrubs, and trees, many of which are exotics, was not laid off with much taste, nor was it large." This, from the orderly inclined mind of the Master of Mount Vernon is delightful. Three times he went fishing. First to Valley Forge with Gouverneur Morris and the first day, "Whilst Mr. Morris was fishing, I rid over the old Cantonment of the American Army of the Winter, 1777 and 8, visited all the Works, wch. were in ruins; and the Incampments in woods where the ground had not been cultivated." There is a world of material for thought here. Washington was an enthusiastic fisherman, yet he passed up a good opportunity for trout and chose instead to ride over the Valley Forge encampment. He visited all the works and how much time this would take in a phaeton, or on horseback, let those who have gone over the whole of Valley Forge by motor, estimate. It is not a hasty visit and nothing but a deep and abiding interest could have caused Washington to make it. The next fishing expedition was to Trenton, where he stayed two days. He makes no mention of the battle, but he dined at General Philemon Dickinson's "on the East side of the River a little above Trenton," which would have placed him almost on the direct line of march on that bitter Christmas night of 1776. The third fishing trip was to Whitmarsh, where he "In company with Mr. Powell . . . traversed my old Incampment, and contemplated on the dangers which threatened the American Army at that place." He dined at Germantown and visited Blair McClenachan, whose reckless bravery at Trenton had contributed a fair share to the sweeping rush of that victory. If there were nothing else, these three fishing trips of Washington to the three most important points of the Revolution around Philadelphia, would be enough to insure him a place among men of feeling.

On September seventeenth, the Constitution having been agreed to by all members of the Convention save three, the members dined at the City Tavern and parted, when Washington returned to his lodgings "and retired to meditate on the momentous w—k which had been executed."

Curiously, too, as he had been taken rather violently ill on this journey to Philadelphia, so on his way back to Mount Vernon, he met with what might have been a serious accident by one of his chariot horses falling through a rotten bridge.¹

Back at Mount Vernon and again immersed in the work of perfecting

the farming system, Washington nevertheless found that the one wish of his heart had become that of the adoption of the new Constitution. He acknowledged its imperfections, but maintained that it was the best that could then be obtained, and with fair means provided for changes and alterations, his logic was that the plan should be adopted and the matter of alterations could then be taken up. His faith in the workability of the new plan was full and complete and while he did not enter the public controversy which soon raged throughout the states, he did write urgently to many of his friends in favor of adoption. When the first numbers of the *Federalist* appeared they met with his strong approval, but he did not know who were the authors for some time thereafter. He watched with pleasure the adoption of the Constitution by one state after another and no one breathed a greater sigh of relief than Washington when the ninth state ended the suspense. "No one can rejoice more than I do at every step the people of this great country take to preserve the Union, to establish good order and government and to render the nation happy at home and respected abroad," he wrote to Benjamin Lincoln, July 29, 1788, and a more concise definition of a proper national ambition has never been stated. Simply worded as it is, no nation could desire a higher destiny.

Knowing what he knew of the creation of the Constitution most of the objections of those who opposed its adoption struck him as imaginary bogeys and Jefferson's idea that the president should be ineligible for reelection was met with typical common-sense Washington logic.

There cannot, in my judgment be the least danger, that the president will by any practicable intrigue ever be able to continue himself one moment in office much less perpetuate himself in it, but in the last stage of corrupted morals and political depravity; and even then, there is as much danger that any other species of domination would prevail. Though when a people shall have become incapable of governing themselves, and fit for a master, it is of little consequence from what quarter he comes.²

Even before the Constitution had been adopted, public opinion had settled upon Washington for the first president, but nothing could have been more disturbing and unsettling to him. In the above letter to Lafayette, in answer to the Marquis's questions along this line, he stated that it

would hardly be decent for him to say anything about an event which might never come to pass, but that such a happening had no enticing charms or fascinating allurements and that he had no "wish beyond that of living and dying" (and then his old sardonic humor came to the fore) "an honest man, on my own farm." He was willing to leave all political preferment to those who had a keener relish for the pursuits of ambition and fame. Alexander Hamilton was among the earliest to urge Washington to accept the Presidency, but the General put him off with the statement that the event he alluded to might never happen. Hamilton's work in supporting the new Constitution was largely responsible for the renewed warmth of Washington's friendship and he opened his heart to him on the subject of the Presidency with greater freedom than to any other. He did not want to be president and from the urging of his friends he finally took refuge in the statement that he must reserve the right to make his decision when the contingency became a fact. The unanimous vote of the electors was the deciding factor and he concluded to accept the trust.

That point being settled, the next was one of personal finances. Of all the debts owing to him practically none could be collected, without resorting to suits at law and this was a tedious and slow method at best. So he was obliged to do what he never expected "to be driven to, that is, borrow money on interest." He wished to pay all his debts in Alexandria and elsewhere before he left Virginia to take office as president, and five hundred pounds, he estimated, would enable him to do this. He applied to Captain Richard Conway, of Alexandria, for this loan and offered any security desired. He could not sell his land, though he had tried and his aphorism to Warner Lewis was typical of his common sense: "Everything," he admitted, "was worth what it will fetch but in these times of scarcity, everything will not fetch what it is worth." It should be recorded too that Conway advanced the money on Washington's bond, without any other security, which is fair evidence that Washington's friends and neighbors were unacquainted with the alleged fact, so cleverly discovered by biographers a hundred years later, that he was a man of sharp business practices and dealings.

The political developments had scarcely begun to point toward Washington as the first president before a trickle of applications for office flowed into Mount Vernon; the trickle quickly became a stream and when

the adoption of the Constitution was seen to be a foregone conclusion, the stream swelled almost to a flood. The applications themselves, in most instances, were insignificant, but they did draw from Washington some statements of principle which are worth reading. To Samuel Hanson, after explaining the embarrassment under which his application placed him, he wrote that "I will never put it in the power of any to say that I have deceived or misled him by assurances or hopes which on the completion, I *might* find myself embarrassed."⁴ To Benjamin Harrison (March 9, 1789) he complained that almost everything he wrote or said found its way into the public gazettes as well as having ascribed to him things he never even imagined and we may judge of the character of some of these irritations when Washington's calm was shaken to the point that he felt obliged, in February, to publish a card in the public prints calling upon the anonymous vilifier who charged him with having located and claimed some of George William Fairfax's land as his own, to come forward and substantiate the charge. Such an accusation touched Washington on the raw, for a more despicable aspersion could hardly have been concocted.

"My movements to the chair of government," he wrote to Knox, "will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of execution. . . . I am sensible that I am embarking the voice of the people and a good name of my own on this voyage; but what returns will be made for them, Heaven alone can foretell. Integrity and firmness is all I can promise. These be the voyage long or short, shall never forsake me, although I may be deserted by all men; for of the consolations, which are to be derived from these, under any circumstances, the world cannot deprive me."⁵ "I may err," he had written to Harrison, "notwithstanding my most strenuous efforts to execute the difficult trust with fidelity and unexceptionably; but my errors shall be of the head, not of the heart."⁶

CHAPTER LXVII

THE INAUGURATION—PRECEDENTS

APRIL 16, 1789, George Washington set out from Mount Vernon for New York to be inaugurated the first president of the United States. His journey was one continuous ovation from the citizens along the entire route, the most noticeable of which occurred at Trenton, New Jersey, where the bridge over the Assunpink was decorated with garlands and the young ladies of the town strewed flowers before him, while they sang an ode specially written for the occasion by Mrs. Richard Stockton.

The oath was administered to the President by Chancellor Livingston, of New York, on the outer balcony of the United States Building, the site of which is now marked by a bronze statue of Washington in front of the old United States Sub-Treasury, in Wall Street.

Washington's inaugural address, which was delivered to both houses of Congress, inside the Senate chamber, was distinguished for but two points: the evidences of the hand of Providence in supporting the United States and his own determination not to accept pay for his services beyond his actual expenses. This, after later consideration, was seen to be a bad precedent, and Washington signed without comment the appropriation act fixing the salaries of government officials and that of the president at twenty-five thousand dollars a year; but he saw to it that the expenses of the office ran above that figure, so that he did not in this case, as in that of the office of Commander-in-Chief, during the Revolution "make any profit from it."

Two entirely opposite accounts of the inauguration are those by Fisher Ames and William Maclay. Ames described the delivery of Washington's inaugural address as an exhibition of modesty, his voice deep, a little tremulous and affecting the members sensibly, and, he continued, "after making all deductions for the illusions of one's fancy in regard to characters, I still think of him with more veneration than for any other

person." William Maclay's description of precisely the same thing ascribed the delivery as awkward; his was an interpretation of criticism and subsequent records justify the idea that Maclay was something of a misanthrope.

Congress replied to the President's address and the President replied in turn. (This time wasting and useless formality were discontinued by President Jefferson.)

Although Washington had been for years the recipient of an adulation sufficient to turn any man's head, he was far from being unable to appraise properly the human nature behind it, and in a letter to Edward Rutledge, May 5, 1789, he sagely apprehends "that my Countrymen will expect too much from me. I fear if the issues of public measures should not correspond with their sanguine expectations, they will turn the extravagant (and I may say undue) praises which they are heaping upon me at this moment, into equally extravagant (though I will fondly hope unmerited) censures." No President received so much praise and few so much blame as George Washington; but he discounted the former and ignored the latter, in so far as his sensitiveness permitted. "So much is expected," he continued to Rutledge, "so many untoward circumstances may intervene, in such a new and critical situation, that I feel an insuperable diffidence in my own abilities; I feel in the execution of the duties of my arduous office, how much I shall stand in need of the countenance and aid of every friend to myself, of every friend to the Revolution, and of every lover of good Government."¹ When George Washington wrote to those whom he considered his true friends, he spoke feelingly.

Almost at once the necessity for an established line of official social procedure became manifest. It speedily became impossible to attend to the pressing affairs of government business with interruptions of a social nature thrusting themselves upon him. There was in the beginning, an understandable curiosity to visit the President and to obtain or offer invitations to social affairs. Washington realized that it was impossible to follow a line of conduct which would please every one, and in order to settle upon that which would come nearest to meeting general approbation, he asked the Vice-President, Madison, Jay and Hamilton for their opinions upon a series of points which would enable him to choose the best course. His idea of the President's giving four great entertainments

a year on the four great anniversaries of the Fourth of July, the Alliance with France, the Peace with Great Britain and the Establishment of the Government, was not generally approved. It was decided that the President should accept no invitations and make no formal calls, a practise adhered to down to the present; though Washington himself and nearly every other president has broken through the practise informally. Once a week, on Tuesdays, the official levees were held, at which all merely complimentary visits were made to the President. Mrs. Washington also held special levees, which the President always attended. It would, Washington felt, be much easier to settle these small points, which might nevertheless "have great and durable consequences from their having been established at the commencement of the new general government," than later to change a wrong practise which had become confirmed by habit. "The President" in all matters of business and etiquette, Washington stated, "can have no object but to demean himself in his public character in such a manner as to maintain the dignity of his office, without subjecting himself to the imputation of superciliousness or unnecessary reserve."²

It was inevitable that the President's course of ceremonial, a course adopted with but one end in view, that of attending to public business and not permitting his time to be wasted by idle social ceremony, should be criticized by smaller-minded men, who thought themselves better democrats. Washington regretted the rather stiff formality of his levees but hoped it would be ascribed to his age, and the unskilfulness of his teachers, rather than to pride and dignity of office "which God knows," he wrote wearily to David Stuart,³ "has no charms for me. For I can truly say I had rather be at Mount Vernon with a friend or two about me, than be attended at the seat of government by the officers of state and representatives of every power in Europe." He had already had two attacks of illness, due to lack of the outdoor life to which he was accustomed. The second was worse than the first. "A third more probably will put me to sleep with my fathers." Washington was beginning to feel the strain.

He was well aware of the jealousies existing both in Congress and among the people, but, as he wrote to Chancellor Livingston: "When I accepted the important trust committed to my charge by my Country, I gave up every idea of personal gratification that I did not think was compatible with the public good."⁴ Washington's comprehension of the situation, a

comprehension not so clearly grasped by his contemporaries, is best expressed in his letter to Mrs. Macaulay-Graham (January 9, 1790).

Few who are not philosophical spectators, can realize the difficult and delicate part, which a man in my situation has to act. . . . In our progress towards political happiness my station is new, and, if I may use the expression, I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely an action, the motive of which may not be subject to a double interpretation. There is scarcely any part of my conduct which may not hereafter be drawn into precedent.

It took some time to get the governmental machine into running order. Congress had to establish the great executive departments and Washington had to appoint capable men to direct them. In this he moved slowly, for it was not at all settled that such appointments would be joyfully accepted and the one thing to be avoided was declination, for it would tend to weaken the new government in the eyes of men, did many of those who were offered high positions decline.

But the acceptances came more as a tribute to Washington himself than to the government; though such was the modesty of the man that he was convinced that in all cases it was patriotic duty which brought these acceptances. It was not until September, 1789, that the government's organization became measurably complete and able to function without great inconvenience; but it was at the end of May that Washington established a precedent of far-reaching importance in this government functioning. The French Minister, Comte de Moustier, had approached the President directly in the matter of a treaty negotiation without deigning to notice the Department of Foreign Affairs as the proper official channel. Washington's letter to the Minister (May 25, 1789) was a diplomatic document of high rank. He supposed, he wrote that the only question of negotiation between the two nations was a commercial one and, with perfect diplomatic skill, maintained that he was "so little acquainted with commercial affairs that I should very much mistrust my own judgment, even in the opinions which I might be obliged to hazard in treating casually of them." Then he took an unassailable position: "*This fact, if there had been no other circumstance that merited a consideration, would be a conclusive reason for preventing me individually from entering upon any*

kind of negotiation on that subject." Having thus gently but unmistakably rebuked Moustier for attempting to deal directly with the President, he assured the Comte that he would do everything in his power to forward the negotiation, and should "not readily consent to lose one of the most important functions of my office, for the sake of preserving an imaginary dignity." Moustier had presumed somewhat on what he considered America's debt to France. It was an attitude of patronage which no one would note and resent quicker than Washington. He dealt with it with perfect politeness: "But perhaps if there are rules of proceedings which have originated from the wisdom of statesmen, and are sanctioned by the common consent of nations, it would not be prudent for a young state to dispense with them altogether." And to make it the more impossible for the French Minister to continue along the lines he had started, Washington clinched his position by stating his preference of conducting negotiations in writing, as a mode "less liable to accidental mistakes or unintentional misrepresentations." This left the Minister completely defeated, for when he reduced his negotiation to writing, President Washington would at once have referred it to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and the Minister would be compelled to conduct the rest of the business through that channel. No further attempt was made by the Frenchman to obtain special recognition, for no one knew better than the trained French diplomat when he had been checkmated.

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CHAPTER LXVIII

THE NEW ENGLAND TOUR—ILLNESS—SOME LETTERS

THE Department of Foreign Affairs was created by law July 27, 1789, and when on September fifteenth, an act made this department the official custodian of the Great Seal of the United States and the records, the name was changed to that of Department of State. John Jay, who had been Secretary of Foreign Affairs under the old Continental Congress, continued in the new department until the arrival of Thomas Jefferson, whom Washington appointed Secretary of State, from France, November eighteenth. August seventh the War Department was created and Henry Knox placed at its head a month later. September second the Treasury Department came into being, and Alexander Hamilton was placed at the head of it nine days later. September twenty-second the Post Office was continued from the old Continental organization, with Samuel Osgood as Postmaster-General (it was not permanently established until 1792), and September twenty-fourth, the Judiciary was established with Edmund Randolph as Attorney-General.

In the higher offices of the government, as well as in the lower, it is interesting to note that Washington appointed the men he had known and proved in the trying days of the Revolution. Hamilton and Randolph had been his aides-de-camp and Knox had been his chief of artillery. John Jay had been one of his firm supporters and friends and when Jefferson came home, Washington appointed Jay Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

The United States Government did not begin to function in full power before January, 1790. The year 1789 was a period of adjustment, of fitting the various parts of the official machine together, but Washington made one move of importance in the latter part of the year. He requested Gouverneur Morris, who was then in France, to press Great Britain on the matter of relinquishing the western posts, according to the treaty of peace, and find out what that nation intended to do about compensation for negroes carried away by the British Army. Also to sound out the

British on the matter of a commercial treaty. "It is in my opinion very important that we avoid errors in our system of policy respecting Great Britain."¹ President Washington was not forgetting General Washington's experiences in dealing with the British.

Congress adjourned in September, not to meet again until January, and the President determined to tour the New England states during the interval. He undertook this journey to improve his health which had been weakened by the carbuncle, mentioned later, to see how New England had recovered from the ravages of the war and, last but by no means least, to discover how well the inhabitants were disposed to support the general government.² He left New York the middle of October and passed through Connecticut and Massachusetts to New Hampshire. He returned through the same states without visiting Rhode Island. The outstanding occurrence of the tour was the dispute for precedence in welcoming the President that developed between the authorities of Boston and the Massachusetts state officials. It became an awkward situation which delayed Washington until he was on the point of entering Boston by a different route, leaving the disputants to wrangle to their hearts' content. But matters were adjusted at the last minute and the President's entry to the city was as had been arranged. But Governor John Hancock chose to assume that the Governor of Massachusetts was superior, in that state's capital, to the President of the United States, when the latter was a visitor. The attitude was evidence that understanding of a national government was still imperfectly grasped in Massachusetts, though of course a large element in the matter was the well-known Hancock ego, which had decided that the President of the United States should pay his respects to the Governor first, before the Governor called upon the President. Unfortunately for Hancock, George Washington's concept of the dignity and importance of the office of President of the United States did not admit of a state being considered superior to the Federal Government in a matter of official rank, so the end was Hancock's surrender and a sudden, severe fit of gout most opportunely explained the delay of a day in making the first call. Swathed in bandages, the Governor was carried into President Washington's presence by stalwart retainers, and the perfect civility with which he was received must have been as humiliating to Hancock as the solicitude so blandly expressed for his condition.

One other incident of this journey is worth recording, as it is so entirely the reverse of the stony official dignity of the Hancock episode. On the return journey, Washington stopped near Uxbridge, Massachusetts, at the house of Samuel Taft (the Uxbridge inn being closed) "where, though the people were obliging, the entertainment was not very inviting." The next day he wrote to Taft, from Ashford, a letter which only a man who loved children could or would have written:

Being informed that you have given my name to one of your Sons and called the other after Mrs. Washington's family, and being moreover much pleased with the modest and innocent looks of your two daughters Patty and Polly, I do for each of these reasons send each of these Girls a piece of chintz. And to Patty, who bears the name of Mrs. Washington and who waited upon us more than Polly did, I send five Guineas, with which she may buy herself any little ornaments she may want or she may dispose of them in any other manner agreeable to herself. As I do not give these things with a view to have it talked of, or even to its being known, the less there is said about the matter the better you will please me; but that I may be sure the chintz and money have got safe to hand, let Patty, who I dare say is equal to it, write me a line informing me thereof directed to "The President of the United States at New York." I wish you and your family well and am your humble servant, Go: Washington.

Patty's charming reply is still preserved in the Washington Papers.⁸

He reached New York November thirteenth and from that date to the end of the year there was little of an exciting nature. The treaty with the Creek Indians was the only important government business that transpired, and Washington's diary merely records his horseback rides for exercise, his walks about the Battery some afternoons for the same purpose and his visits to the theater and dancing assembly, with Mrs. Washington. To improve the appearance of his dinner table he had asked Gouverneur Morris to obtain central mirrors, with plated frames, something like those used by Robert Morris, and wine coolers for use during and after dinner, but he warned against expense: "For extravagance would not comport with my own inclinations, nor with the example which ought to be set."⁴

But before the governmental machine had been geared into smooth operation, in 1789, the President developed what was called a large tumor on his thigh. It seems to have been a dangerous carbuncle (anthrax) which tortured him for weeks, and at its climax, the street where he lived was roped off to prevent traffic noises from disturbing him. Dr. Samuel Bard, who was the attendant physician, has left an anecdote of his patient which is typical enough to gain credence. Washington asked Bard to tell him his exact condition: "Do not flatter me with vain hope," he said, "I am not afraid to die." Doctor Bard acknowledged his apprehensions and Washington replied: "Whether to-night, or twenty years hence, makes no difference; I know I am in the hands of a good Providence."

He was still suffering when he wrote one of his beautiful letters to the venerable Charles Thomson on that gentleman's wish to retire from the public service:

The present age does so much justice to the unsullied reputation, with which you have always conducted yourself in the execution of the duties of your office, and posterity will find your name so honorably connected with the verification of such a multitude of astonishing facts, that my single suffrage would add little to the illustration of your merits. Yet I cannot withhold any just testimonial in favor of so old, so faithful and so able a public officer, which might tend to soothe his mind in the shade of retirement. Accept then, this serious declaration that your services have been important as your patriotism was distinguished; and enjoy that best of all rewards, the consciousness of having done your duty well.⁵

To Benjamin Franklin, two months later, he surpassed even this letter:

The affectionate congratulations on the recovery of my health, and the warm expression of personal friendship, which were contained in your letter of the 16th instant, claim my gratitude. And the consideration that it was written when you were afflicted with a painful malady⁶ greatly increases my obligation for it. Would to God, my dear Sir, that I could congratulate you upon the removal of that excruciating pain, under which you labor, and that your existence might close with as much ease to yourself, as its continuance has been beneficial to our country and useful to mankind; or, if the united

wishes of a free people, joined with the earnest prayers of every friend to science and humanity, could relieve the body from pains and infirmities you could claim an exemption on this score. . . . If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know, that you have not lived in vain. And I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured that so long as I retain my memory, you will be thought on with respect, veneration and affection by your sincere friend Go:Washington.

Although Washington was a stickler for the polite forms of correspondence of the time, he never failed to finish a letter with something more than mere form where there was occasion for it; the romantic strain in his character impelling him to do this.

Washington's mother died August 25, 1789,⁷ and his reaction to the blow was expressed in his letter to his sister Betty (September thirteenth). He had been prepared for the news by accounts of illness and was first informed of the fatal outcome by Colonel Burgess Ball:

Awful and affecting as the death of a parent is there is consolation in knowing that heaven has spared ours to an age beyond which few attain, and favored her with the full enjoyment of her mental faculties, and as much bodily strength as usually falls to the lot of fourscore. Under these considerations and a hope that she is translated to a happier place, it is the duty of her relatives to yield due submission to the decrees of the Creator. When I was last at Fredericksburg I took a final leave of my mother never expecting to see her more. . . . Were it not that the specific bequests which are given to me by the will, are meant and ought to be considered and received as mementoes of parental affection, in the last solemn act of life, I should not be desirous of receiving or removing them; but in this point of view, I set a value on them much beyond their intrinsic worth.

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CHAPTER LXIX

THE ASSUMPTION OF STATES' DEBTS—PUBLIC FINANCES

JANUARY 8, 1790, President George Washington delivered his first annual address or message, to the First Congress of the United States. He was dressed on this occasion in a suit of broadcloth which he had purchased himself at the woolen factory at Hartford, Connecticut, when there the previous fall. It was a distinct economic gesture by the President, of encouragement to American manufactures, even though "Their Broad-Cloths were not of the first quality as yet."¹

His address was short, the subjects touched upon were few, but those few were important. The establishment of a national defense was urged, in which he laid down the principle that "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace." The establishment of a fund for the expenses of foreign negotiations was recommended, the advancement of agriculture, commerce and manufactures and education for the people were dealt with at greater length than any other subject. "Knowledge," he wrote, "is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one, in which the measures of government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the community, as in ours, it is proportionately essential." He returned to this idea again in his Farewell Address, for it held a prominent place in his thought.²

When Congress convened in 1790, President Washington found his main problems, outside the always important matter of finance and credit, to be the Indian situation and the selection of a permanent site for the National Government. Alexander Hamilton, as Secretary of the Treasury, was bringing his best intelligence to bear upon the financial problems and made use of the selection of the seat of government as a political factor to further his plan of having the National Government take over the state debts, which had been contracted during the Revolutionary War. The matter of the selection of a permanent seat of government seems to us today to have caused an excitement out of all proportion to its real im-

portance. The assumption of the states' debts was a vital matter and if the permanent seat of government had not been used as a political pawn in the game which Alexander Hamilton played to insure victory for his assumption plan, it may be doubted if this question would now figure so largely in the early history of the nation. The bargain between Hamilton and Jefferson, by which the national capital was located on the Potomac River, which has been made so much of, is really of minor importance compared with the fact that it was over the question of the assumption of states' debts that the political split came between Hamilton and Jefferson. This split was the beginning of the habit of our two-party system in national politics, which called forth denunciation from Washington and which, however startling the statement may seem, has more than justified that denunciation. No more pernicious interference with good government is to be found and while George Washington's objections may seem hopelessly idealistic, it is well to remember that Washington's ideas of government were always soundly practical. With him "The establishment of our new government seemed to be the last great experiment for promoting human happiness by a reasonable compact in civil society,"⁸ and this he knew full well could not be obtained where two sets of men were contending for control of the government for personal, selfish purposes. His idea only seems to smack of impossible idealism as long as it is forgotten that Washington's logic was that human happiness was only obtainable through just government, and that there can be no possibility of just government where governmental power is always sought for selfish reasons. The Hamilton-Jefferson feud was, in reality, the first alignment of American political parties. A strong centralized government (Federalism) on the one hand, opposed by individualism and not too strong state governments on the other. This struggle has, with sundry modifications on both sides, continued as our two-party system to the present day. Washington, whose experience during the Revolution had shown him the weakness of thirteen states without respect for a central government, could never have thought otherwise than he did. He leaned clearly to Hamilton's theory, though he did not always follow that energetic young gentleman as far as Hamilton's reckless certainty sometimes carried him. Jefferson's idea, which was something in the nature of a protest against all authority, while intellectually sound, had not been personally tested by him as it had been by

Washington, through the dark and bitter days of 1777-80. There is no doubt that Jefferson honestly believed in the dangers toward which Hamilton's course led, for those dangers were actual and real; but the strength of his belief was inextricably mixed with his bitter hatred of Alexander Hamilton, and his dislike of Washington, for all that he affected a disdain for him, was not unmixed with jealousy of Hamilton's place in Washington's confidence. This feeling was fully the equal of his personal, patriotic opposition to the Federalist theory.

The complicated problem of settling the finances and credit of the United States has been studied so fully from Alexander Hamilton's side, that President Washington's interest in the matter, or thoughts upon the subject, have been neglected. Hamilton's work in creating and developing the public credit has centered attention upon him and it is usually forgotten that the President naturally had a certain amount of authority in the matter, even though the Secretary of the Treasury addressed his report on the public credit to Congress direct. In the Washington Manuscripts is an undated paper in Washington's writing, headed "Plan of American Finance," which divides the problem into three parts. (1) A foreign loan. (2) A direct tax. (3) An indirect tax. It is the barest kind of outline, but it displays thought and grasp of national finance of which even Alexander Hamilton need not have felt ashamed.

1. An European loan of twelve millions at five per cent. was suggested. This would be sufficient to refund the foreign debt and meet the government's current expenses for a year or two. A five per cent. impost, or tariff would be levied and this Washington supposed would produce from one and one-half to two millions with which the interest on the foreign loan could be met and surplus after the running expenses of the government were met would be placed in an "aggregate" fund against the principal of the loan.

2. A direct tax of one-twentieth of all produce, payable in kind or commutable at half. This would take care of the army and navy, and interest on the domestic debt. Any surplus would go into the aggregate fund.

3. A postage tax and one on civil processes. The proceeds would meet the civil list expense and help on the interest of the domestic debt contingencies and form a sinking fund.

This was certainly a clean-cut and simple proposition. It might not have produced revenues to the amount expected, but it shows that George Washington capably grasped the fundamentals of the nation's financial problems and raises the interesting speculation of the extent of the verbal discussion upon the subject between the President and his Secretary of the Treasury.

CHAPTER LXX

WESTERN INDIANS—L'ENFANT, JEFFERSON AND THE FEDERAL CITY—JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON—CITIZEN GENÊT—THE WHISKY REBELLION AND GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY

A JOURNEY through the southern states in 1791, in which Washington went as far south as Savannah, offset his tour to the New England states and was the last of his extensive travels. After his return to Mount Vernon from this two-month trip, with the exception of his journey into western Pennsylvania at the time of the Whisky Rebellion and his necessary travels back and forth between Philadelphia and Mount Vernon while president and an inspection tour to the camp at Harper's Ferry in 1799, Washington did not thereafter move a dozen miles from the banks of the Potomac.

On his return from the southern tour, he stopped a few days at Mount Vernon and at the new Federal City, where he located the President's house, the executive department buildings and the Capitol, and went on to Philadelphia by the rather unusual route of York and Lancaster.

The development of the national Capitol was now occupying a large place in his thought, but disagreeable distractions of both foreign and domestic matters were claiming his attention. The western Indians, after the failure of General Harmar's expedition against them, were becoming increasingly dangerous to the frontier and Major-General Arthur St. Clair was placed in command of an expedition to chastise the savages and recover the prestige lost through Harmar. It was an unfortunate choice. St. Clair was in no physical condition to undertake an Indian campaign. The militia which formed a considerable part of his force were worse than useless and, as it turned out, were a main cause of the disaster which St. Clair was unable to avoid. His army was destroyed in the manner and with about the same completeness as Braddock's had been, and St. Clair himself barely escaped with his life. The frontier was left exposed

and panic-stricken. Washington reacted to the news of the disaster by one of his overpowering outbursts of rage. "Here in this very room," he stormed, "I warned General St. Clair against being surprised." But St. Clair had not heeded.¹ Washington's rage was the rage of the Colonel of the First Virginia Regiment of 1757, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, who knew by bitter experience what it meant to collect, arm and equip a force, only to have it annihilated, the man-power wasted, and all the time and expense go for naught. With it all to do over again, men to be recruited and trained, supplies to be gathered anew and time, money and men not easily available by the young government, Washington's rage is both understandable and excusable.

But the same patience, the same dogged perseverance that was so in evidence during the Revolution, came into play again as soon as his rage subsided. It took two years to gather another army, but fortunately the Indians did not immediately follow up their victory. When the time was ripe the new army, this time under the command of "Mad Anthony" Wayne, marched into the Indian country and crushed the savages completely at Fallen Timbers (1794). The treaty which the Indians signed with Wayne the next year was respected and the frontier was quiet for many years thereafter.

But the Indian troubles were only a part of Washington's difficulties. Closer to his heart were the unnecessary troubles which speedily developed in the Federal City. Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, whose artistic vision and genius had carried him far beyond the real-estate speculator and profit-making men with whom he had to deal, was slowly getting into a tangle with his plan for the Federal City. Washington was the only man who was not confused by L'Enfant's vision of futurity and he supported the French engineer as long as it was officially possible to do so. Unfortunately, L'Enfant would not admit the necessity of a public auction of city lots before he was ready for such a move and speculative greed combined with political influence to ensnare the Frenchman. Some curious, untold history involves Jefferson's pride in his knowledge of city planning and this pride being tactlessly wounded by L'Enfant; whereupon the genius who was thinking only of the success of his artistic vision proved an easy victim to the finesse of Jeffersonian maneuvering. L'Enfant was cleverly jockeyed into a position where Washington could do nothing but ac-

quiesce in his dismissal but fortunately, before this happened, the broad scope of L'Enfant's plan had been grasped by Washington. Jefferson could bring about L'Enfant's dismissal, but he could not substitute for the Frenchman's great plan the small, confined and totally inadequate concept of his own, which would have held the Capitol of the United States to a building area less than a tenth of what L'Enfant visioned and of what Washington is to-day. It is also sheer nonsense to continue the threadbare falsehood that the main cause of the Frenchman's dismissal was the destruction of Daniel Carroll's house because it interfered with the line of a street. Carroll chose a location for his house that destroyed one of L'Enfant's main focal points. The projected house destroyed the balance of that plan and ruined one of the majestic features of a great artistic design. It was this, more than the fact that he interfered with a street line, that brought L'Enfant down upon Carroll's house with a wrecking crew.

The entire trouble lay in the fact that L'Enfant, with a great creative design, was being hampered and harassed by real-estate speculators who had no regard for his plan and thought only of schemes for profit. The District Commissioners whom Washington appointed and in whom he had perfect confidence were, unfortunately, influenced through ties of family relationships with the very men who were intent on developing the Federal City as a profit-making real-estate proposition. This fact never came clearly to Washington's attention and there is an almost plaintive strain in his letter to the Commissioners of December 27, 1791: "I find by a letter which I have just received from Major L'Enfant that the house of Notley Young Esqr. has (contrary to expectation) fallen into a principal street. But I hope the Major does not mean to proceed to the demolition of this also unless he is properly authorized and instructed." But this being a mere matter of street-line interference, the Major did not so proceed. Young was given ample time to remove his house and there was no trouble at all about it.

In the second year of the young republic, a Spanish ship in far-off Nootka Sound, on the northwest coast of North America, created diplomatic difficulty between Great Britain and Spain which bid fair to make the first real test of United States diplomacy. It looked like a war between Spain and Great Britain, and a Major George Beckwith of the British Army and an aide-de-camp of Sir Guy Carleton, appeared in New

York and talked guardedly of the expected hostilities, the attitude the United States might take and sundry other things, in which the British retention of the western posts was lightly touched upon. Washington discounted the advance properly and requested the Vice-President, Jefferson, Hamilton, Jay and Knox to give him their opinions on the course to pursue, in case Great Britain asked permission to march troops through the territory of the United States from Detroit to the Mississippi. It was a momentous decision to make and an unexpected element developed in a rumor that Benedict Arnold had been seen at Detroit. After much consideration, in which Vattel and Grotius were copiously quoted by Washington's advisers, when what they meant was, we have no army to stop the British if they choose to march, Spain and Great Britain adjusted the matter without recourse to war.

As early as May, 1792, Washington had practically decided in his own mind that he would not again stand for election to the Presidency. On the twentieth of that month he wrote to Madison a letter that is the basis of the Farewell Address and settles many of the points regarding the creation of that well-known document. Nothing, Washington wrote, but the conviction that declining a reelection would involve the country in serious disputes, would change his attitude. He proposed to issue a "valedictory address" to the people, if Madison thought it proper, to impress the fact "that we are *all* the children of the same country . . . that our interest, however diversified is the same in all the great and essential concerns of the Nation." He then enumerated half a dozen heads of subjects that might be touched upon and asked Madison to draft an address along those lines for his consideration.

Two months later Washington discussed the matter of his retirement with Jefferson and noted the criticisms of his management which he found gaining ground, among which Freneau's paper came in for particular mention. Jefferson's *Anas* records this without so much as a quiver, though Jefferson himself, it is now well-known, was the instigator of Freneau's attacks.

Hamilton, of course, was against Washington's retirement.

The most interesting aspect of the Hamilton-Jefferson feud is Washington's attempt to smooth matters out and his appeal to both. He wrote

to Jefferson on August twenty-third and to Hamilton August twenty-sixth, practically the same appeal, yet with subtle differences which, when studied, reveal quite clearly the different opinions he held of the two men. The appeals are also a revelation of Washington's nationalism as a principle far above political gain or personal feeling.

To Hamilton the appeal was more definite and of a broader scope than that made to Jefferson, and though both were powerful it is plain that Washington felt more at home and surer of the reaction from Hamilton. To Jefferson he spoke of the government being "encompassed on all sides with avowed enemies and insidious friends" which was hitting, all unconsciously, close to the truth, though other letters of Washington show that he had not then begun to suspect his Secretary of State of the clever adroitness which later became plain.

Jefferson had sent Washington copious extracts of letters attesting his attachment to the Constitution and Washington had answered that he did not require the evidence of the extracts; "But I regret," he wrote, "deeply regret, the difference in opinions, which have arisen and divided you and another principal officer of the government; and wish devoutly there could be an accommodation of them by mutual yieldings . . . I will frankly and solemnly declare that I believe the views of both of you to be pure and well-meant, and that experience only will decide, with respect to the salubrity of the measures, which are the subjects of dispute." After calling attention to the fact that some of the best citizens of the United States, whose patriotism and motives could not be questioned, were to be found on both sides of the questions, Washington asked, almost plaintively, "Why then should either of you be so tenacious of your opinions, as to make no allowances for those of the other?"

The appeal to Hamilton brought a frank avowal that he was determined to retaliate on Jefferson by showing up the Freneau attacks on the Administration, but the fiery New Yorker pledged his word to concur in any plan that would unite the Cabinet on some principle of cooperation. Jefferson was not frank in his answer to Washington's appeal but replied in a long attack on Hamilton and offered his resignation. There is no means of knowing the exact influence this political feud had upon Washington's decision to continue in the Presidency; but that it was an element of weight is obvious.

The French Revolution had been watched with interest by America, and by no one more than Washington, though he was very cautious in expressing any opinion. The execution of the King, Lafayette forced into exile and the growing excesses of the people cooled some of the American enthusiasm; but an unfortunately large number of emotional-bouncing patriots refused to reason calmly. When war was declared between Great Britain and France, the British took it for granted that the United States would side with and assist France. The French were even more convinced of this and Citizen Edmund Charles Genêt, representing the Revolutionary Government, landed in Charleston, South Carolina, early in April, 1793, bringing with him a decidedly dangerous complication for the young American Government. The treaty of Alliance of 1778 seemed to imply that in event of war French privateers could find shelter in American ports. Citizen Genêt determined to act upon this implication with energy. Two weeks before Genêt's arrival, President Washington had written a private letter to his old aide and well-liked friend, David Humphreys, that the news from Europe presaged a general war there. He hoped it would not happen "but, if it should, I trust that we shall have too just a sense of our own interest to originate any cause that may involve us in it. And I ardently wish we may not be forced into it by the conduct of other nations."

Reelected to the Presidency, despite his earnest wish to retire to Mount Vernon, it seemed that Washington's second Administration bid fair to force upon him heavier responsibilities than ever. Citizen Genêt's progress from Charleston to Philadelphia was made one of hysterical excitement by the pro-French and anti-British elements; a succession of banquets and fiery orations thoroughly convinced the French Minister that the United States would do all that was expected of it. But three weeks before Genêt reached Philadelphia, Washington had submitted the question of neutrality to his Cabinet and the result was that Randolph was directed to draft a proclamation² committing the United States to a neutral course, which Washington signed and issued April 22, 1793.

The rebuffs Genêt met with from the government, after having been so enthusiastically received by the populace, confused him greatly, but he continued energetically at his task until brought to a stand by the refusal of the United States to advance him money, though he had applied for it

under the guise of the repayment of the funds lent to America by France during the American Revolution. He tried to obtain arms from the Secretary of War and was refused, but he managed to continue his privateer outfitting, begun in Charleston, by one means or another and succeeded in getting them out to sea, until Washington's calmness exploded in a sharp letter to the Secretary of State: "After I had read the papers (which were put into my hands by you) requiring 'instant attention' and before a messenger could reach your office, you had left town." After thus informing Jefferson that his ideas of the importance of matters were at variance with his actions, he continued: "What is to be done in the case of the *Little Sarah* now at Chester? Is the minister of the French Republic to set the acts of this government at defiance *with impunity*? And then threaten the executive with an appeal to the people? What must the world think of such conduct and of the government of the United States in submitting to it?"³

Again comes Washington's amazement that his Cabinet officer should not be as jealous of the reputation of the nation as was the President; but again Washington could not conceive of the personal hatred of Jefferson for the Secretary of the Treasury, and of the ambition in the Republican leader which made him willing to sacrifice even the reputation of the nation in order to ruin the Federalist power. It is doubtful if Jefferson could admit to himself the national consequences of his course, which appeared so plain to Washington. But the many letters from the Secretary of State to his intimates declaring that Genêt was strengthening the position of the Hamiltonians, demonstrate the difficulties with which Washington had to deal without clearly seeing the causes. The harried President even went the length of asking the opinion of the Justices of the Supreme Court on the points of international law involved in Genêt's activities; the Justices declined to be consulted, and in August Washington's patience was exhausted. France was asked to recall Genêt and by the time the request was received a different set of men were in control at Paris and Genêt was recalled. He feared to return to France, where he would probably have been guillotined; became a citizen of the United States, married a daughter of Governor George Clinton of New York, and never went back to France.

The protests from George Hammond, the British Minister, against

Genêt's activities on the one hand, and the inconsistent conduct of the Secretary of State on the other, were not conducive to the peace of mind of a man whose desire was to uphold the dignity and honor of his country, while well aware that the country was too weak to preserve that honor by force. "The conduct of those, who are arraigning and constantly (so far as they are able) embarrassing the measure of government with respect to its pacific disposition towards the belligerent powers," he wrote to Richard Henry Lee (October 24, 1793), "are too obvious. . . . It is not the cause of France, nor I believe of liberty, which they regard; for, could they involve this country in war (no matter with whom) and disgrace, they would be among the first and loudest of the clamorers against the expense and impolicy of the measure."

The presence of yellow fever in Philadelphia in 1795 threatened for a time to interfere with the functioning of the governmental machine, but with cold weather the plague died down and Congress convened at the usual time in December. Washington had contributed two hundred and fifty dollars toward relief of "the *most* needy inhabitants," through Bishop William White, "without ostentation or the mention of my name."

Congress had barely convened when Jefferson claimed his privilege of resignation, of which he had informed Washington in July. Edmund Randolph was offered the position and accepted. Though this resignation correspondence does not show it and Washington was not aware of it, Jefferson's retirement, like the removal of Major-General Charles Lee in 1776, was more of a gain than a loss to Washington. In the excitement and difficulties caused by the British Orders in Council, which directed the seizure of merchant ships going to France and the French West Indies, Washington was again plagued with something close to impertinence from the Republican element. Jefferson's report on United States commercial relations had resulted in a series of resolutions in the House of Representatives, prepared by James Madison, recommending among other things that an envoy be sent to England to smooth out the irritations of America at the high-handed procedure of the British naval officers, and it was rumored that Hamilton would be the envoy. James Monroe wrote protestingly to the President against Hamilton's appointment and Washington's patience was again rubbed thin. He replied that he had always appointed men to every office on account of their definite qualifications

for the particular work, and requested Monroe to put in writing anything he might know that would disqualify Hamilton for the appointment proposed. He ended his short letter with the statement that no one had as yet been decided upon "and, as I alone am responsible for a proper nomination, it certainly behoves me to name such an one, as in my judgment, combines the requisites for a mission so peculiarly interesting to the *peace* and happiness of the country."⁵ The underscoring of the word *peace* does not seem quite haphazard.

If Washington's temper was growing short, there certainly were ample reasons for it. John Jay was the envoy finally appointed, for the purposes, Washington stated to Randolph, April fifteenth: "to prevent war, if justice can be obtained by fair and strong representations of the injuries which this country has sustained from Great Britain in various ways; to put it into a complete state of military defense, and to provide *eventually* such measures as are now pending in Congress for execution, if negotiation in a reasonable time proves unsuccessful." In his message to the Senate nominating Jay, Washington stated the "peace ought to be pursued with unremitted zeal, before the last resource, which has so often been the scourge of nations, and cannot fail to check the advanced prosperity of the United States, is contemplated." Washington knew, better than any other man, the horrible curse of war, but better than some other men, he knew the meaning of national honor.

But "The affairs of this country *cannot go amiss*," he wrote, with a touch of satire, to Gouverneur Morris. "There are *so many watchful guardians of them*, and such infallible guides, that one is at no loss for a director at every turn." This is a description of presidential critics at large, hardly to be improved upon even in the twentieth century. Perhaps the wrench he gave his back at Little Falls of the Potomac on an inspection trip to view the canal and locks there,⁶ may have had something to do with this asperity.

To Jay, in London, he sent this hint of guidance in his negotiations:

I will undertake without the gift of prophecy to predict that it will be impossible to keep this country in a state of amity with Great Britain long, if the [western] posts are not surrendered. A knowledge of these being my sentiments would have little weight, I am persuaded, with the British administration, and perhaps not with

the nation in effecting the measure; but both may rest satisfied that if they want to be in peace with this country, and to enjoy the benefits of its trade, to give up the posts is the only road to it. Withholding them, and consequences we feel at present continuing, war will be inevitable.⁷

Back to the seat of government, to the house in Germantown, taken to escape the heat of the Philadelphia summer, and perhaps the recurrence of the yellow fever, and where, with Congress adjourned, he might feel something of a relief; his tired nerves were once more tightened to a humming pitch by the outbreak in western Pennsylvania, known as the Whisky Rebellion. These disorders had their start from the excise tax of 1791 and 1792; they had been growing steadily and, Washington thought, were a result of the so-called Democratic Societies which originated in Kentucky. He had prophesied when these societies first made their appearance, that unless they were counteracted, "Not by prosecutions, the ready way to make them grow stronger, they would shake the government to its foundations."⁸ The Whisky Rebellion did this. The United States Inspector of Revenue and the United States Marshal were driven from the countryside by an armed mob; other United States officials suffered violence, buildings were burned and the United States laws set at naught in the western Pennsylvania counties. Commissioners had been appointed to smooth matters over, but they had failed; a proclamation issued by Washington, August seventh, ordering the insurgents to disperse by September first, was likewise disregarded, and on September twenty-fifth, Washington, by another proclamation, ordered out the militia of the four states adjacent to Pennsylvania and warned all citizens against aiding and abetting the insurgents. On September thirtieth, he himself set out for the seat of the disturbances. The militia turned out and marched with a spirit that completely disorganized the insurgents. The rebellion collapsed without bloodshed and the ringleaders were seized and handed over to the civil power. On July 10, 1795, President Washington issued a proclamation granting full and free pardon to all the insurgents who had signed the oath of submission and allegiance to the United States.

Washington had gone with the troops into western Pennsylvania for, firmly as he believed in the United States as "the best fabric of human government that has ever been presented for the acceptance of man-

kind,"⁹ he was yet uncertain as to how far that fabric would stand the appalling strain put upon it by these malcontents. The number of the militia and the promptness with which they responded to his call, set his doubts at rest and he returned to Philadelphia before the troops marched into the disturbed region, cheered and heartened by a display of support for the government that had been sadly lacking in the troop-raising activities of the Revolution. Washington's letters during August, September and October of 1794 show his conviction that the Whisky Rebellion was the result of the activities of the Democratic Societies, and he was sure that these Societies had been created by Genêt's propaganda. That this idea was due to his bitter prejudice against them is not surprising, for Washington's greatest prejudice was reserved for the man or men who opposed the government on what he believed to be unfair grounds. The absurd logic of Jefferson's criticism of Washington's suppression of the insurrection, expressed to James Madison (December 28, 1794) and the almost silly critique of his outburst to James Monroe (May 25, 1795) are fairly good evidence that Washington's address to Congress November 19, 1794, reporting the suppression of the rebellion, hit the nail on the head. Jefferson raged against this attack upon the Democratic Societies and his excitement is rather conclusive proof that Washington's charges of responsibility, though they did not indict the Democratic Societies by name, contained an element of truth.

One thing the contemporary critics and opponents of Washington did not seem to realize was that the bitter years of the Revolution had burned into Washington's soul convictions of liberty and the necessity of authority, beside which their untried theories of democracy were the veriest chatter. The man who saw how nearly liberty had been lost for want of a strong centralized governmental power would never experiment with a theory when power was needed.

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CHAPTER LXXI

JAY'S TREATY—RANDOLPH'S RESIGNATION

THE Whisky Insurrection suppressed and the western Indians crushed by Wayne, the domestic troubles of the United States were subsiding when the result of John Jay's treaty negotiations with Great Britain reached America and the political pot began boiling afresh and with a frenzy out of all proportion to the cause. That the Jay Treaty, so-called, accomplished as much as could then have been hoped for, was not for a moment admitted by the enemies of the Administration, the anti-Federalists. Fisher Ames's speech rightly analyzed the excitement as opposition, not to this treaty, but to any treaty with Great Britain. It was a glorious opportunity to heave rocks at Washington's Administration and few rocks were left unheaved. The cry against the treaty, Washington wrote, was like a cry against a mad dog.¹ To the man on the street, who was carefully instructed as to the weak spots in the treaty, the negotiation was made to appear as a complete and abject surrender of commercial and other rights to Great Britain. Washington, Hamilton and Jay came in for a storm of abuse. Hamilton was not then in the government, having resigned as Secretary of the Treasury before the treaty arrived, but it seems to have been pretty well recognized that he had had a large share in this treaty business. In addition to consulting his Cabinet, after the arrival of the treaty, Washington wrote more than once to Hamilton asking his opinion as to the treaty ratification, its meanings, and results to be expected from it. Hamilton came in for his share of vituperation; where some saving sense of decency (though rare) checked some of the abuse of Washington, there existed no such feeling in Hamilton's case and the Jeffersonian followers gloated in their opportunity. Against Jay, the feeling bordered on political insanity. The treaty and Jay were burned in effigy in many places and one Boston emotionalist chalked up in large letters a completely satisfying and comprehensive anathema: "Damn John Jay!" he wrote on a street wall. "Damn every one who won't damn John Jay!! Damn every one who won't sit up all night damning John Jay!!!"²

That the treaty was a disappointment from the standpoint of the vociferous patriot who demanded a complete diplomatic victory from every negotiation, can hardly be denied, but that it obtained from Great Britain everything that that empire was willing to concede at the time, is also beyond cavil. It fixed a definite date on which the British would give up the western posts, the most dangerous point of dispute, and Washington was willing to accept this and neutrality rather than war, for Jay's Treaty did save the United States from a war with Great Britain and also a frontier Indian war. To one of many addresses of protest against the treaty which were sent him, Washington returned this answer:

In every act of my administration, I have sought the happiness of my fellow citizens. My system for the attainment of this object has uniformly been to overlook all personal, local and partial considerations; to contemplate the United States as one great whole; to confide that sudden impressions, when erroneous would yield to candid reflection; and to consult only the substantial and permanent interests of our country. . . . Under this persuasion, I have resolved on the manner of executing the duty before me. To the high responsibility attached to it, I freely submit.³

After making all due allowance for the various causes which were then stimulating American commerce, the rapid increase of exports to the British West Indies must be attributed to a considerable extent to the treaty. As this unusual expansion impressed itself upon the mercantile classes, opposition to the treaty died down so rapidly that within two years, or by the time Washington's second Administration closed, people had forgotten that they had ever been excited by Jay's Treaty, which forgetfulness was the first and practically perfect example of an absurdity, characteristic of American politics.

But before the treaty excitement died, it deprived Washington of another Secretary of State. Joseph Fauchet succeeded Genêt as French Minister and before he had been long in the United States some of his official dispatches were intercepted by the British. One of these, because it inferentially charged Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State, with being amenable to bribes, was immediately forwarded to the British Minister in Philadelphia and by him handed to Secretary of the Treasury Oliver Wol-

cott, Washington being absent at Mount Vernon. The President was hastily summoned back to Philadelphia, and after obtaining the opinions of the other Cabinet members, Washington handed the intercepted dispatch to Randolph, in the presence of Wolcott, Pickering and Bradford. The Secretary of State requested an opportunity to reply in writing and instead of doing so, sent in his resignation. The questions Washington put to his advisers, prior to showing the incriminating dispatch to his Secretary of State, demonstrate the watchful care with which the President considered every move that held possibilities of harm to the nation. Also, up to the moment of decision as to action, he was as sensitive to Randolph's honor as that Secretary could have been himself. Fauchet, as soon as he heard that his dispatches had been intercepted, wrote a declaration denying that Randolph had ever indicated a willingness to accept money and that he had no intention of writing anything derogatory to Randolph's character. It was plain, however, that Randolph had done everything possible to obstruct the ratification of the Jay Treaty,⁴ and Randolph's published *Vindication* does little to clear up the unexplained parts of his conduct. On its appearance, Washington asked Hamilton's advice and was urged to take no notice of it. The final straw to be laid on the heap is that Randolph was, up to the time of his resignation and for many years thereafter, heavily in debt to the United States.⁵

Washington was becoming weary. The management of the affairs of government was a heavy enough task, but when they became complicated by personal greed, unscrupulous ambition, untruth, misrepresentation and all the slimy brood of dishonest politics where, to his straight and simple thinking, every man should be actuated only by a desire to cooperate fully in perfecting the administration of government, he was more than willing to withdraw. He granted a difference of opinion and for this difference he had respect and willing accommodation; but where this difference seemed to him to be dishonest in respect to the main point he had, at first, been coldly antagonistic, later angrily bitter and now, toward the end, weary and yearning to hand the responsibility over to a younger man. But not for one moment did he despair or think of surrender. His shoulders had drooped under the heavy load but the old spirit of Trenton and Valley Forge was as strong as ever. In one thing he had changed, and Randolph's defection may have been the final touch for this: "I shall not,"

he wrote to Pickering, "whilst I have the honor to administer the government, bring a man into any office of consequence knowingly, whose political tenets are adverse to the measures which the general government are pursuing; for this, in my opinion, would be a sort of political suicide."⁶ He had appointed James Monroe Minister to France from a directly opposite conviction, and was soon to experience therein the truth of his statement to Pickering.

The finishing touch of melodrama burlesque was put upon this Jay Treaty hysteria by the demand of the House of Representatives upon the President, for the papers relating to the treaty negotiation. Washington at once requested the opinion in writing of his Cabinet on this demand. This was unanimous against compliance, and after due consideration Washington sent in his message of March 30, 1796, in which he gave some common-sense reasoning for refusing to admit the right of the House to such papers. The message was calm but firm, yet James Madison, who had been steadily drifting toward the democratic or anti-Federalist faction, wrote to Jefferson⁷ that the President's refusal was unexpected and the tone of his message improper and indelicate. The impropriety and indelicacy of the House resolution calling for the papers did not seem to have been noticed by Madison.

Washington was convinced that the House of Representatives was not at all concerned about the records of the treaty negotiation, but that the purpose was to establish whether or not a treaty could be made "without the concurrence of the House of Representatives," which was, he felt, "striking at once, and that boldly, at the fundamental principles of the constitution," for, he sagely remarked, would any one suppose, that when the treaty-making power was lodged solely with the President and Senate that the makers of the Constitution would place it also in the power of the House of Representatives to vote upon such a matter? He called such a thought "an absolute absurdity." The gross misrepresentations of the opponents of the Administration hurt him more than their pernicious activities. "Indeed, the trouble and perplexities . . . added to the weight of years, which have passed over me, have worn away my mind more than my body, and render ease and retirement indispensably necessary to both, during the short time I have to stay here." He had made up his mind that he would not accept another term as president.⁸

CHAPTER LXXII

SOME PERSONAL DETAILS—THE FAREWELL ADDRESS— RETIREMENT—SALLY CARY FAIRFAX

THE month of March, 1796, was enlivened by three theater parties given by the President, and there is record of Mrs. Washington and Nelly Custis visiting the "Automaton," at which Nelly probably wore with satisfied pride the "Pair of gold Ear drops" given her by her admiring guardian, at a cost of eighteen dollars. Washington's birthday, February twenty-second, was celebrated this year in Philadelphia by more than usual ceremony. The church-bells rang, the light horse, artillery and light infantry seized the opportunity to turn out in full strength, to show off their new uniforms, and artillery salutes were fired. Congress, the state officials, the clergy and others visited the President to pay their respects and in the evening the Assembly gave a ball, which the President and Mrs. Washington attended, which was, Dunlap's *Advertiser* reported, "the most brilliant display of beauty, perhaps, ever exhibited in this city." In the midst of this round of high social activity we have a homely little note of everyday life which brings George Washington close to us: "March 7, Contingt. Expns. pd for mending an Umbrella to be kept at the door 62c." Scattered through the days are continuous items of donations to the needy in that quiet unostentatious charity which was so large a part of the heart of George Washington. A dollar or two here and there to "a poor woman." "To a blind man." "To a poor sailor" and to "Two distressed French women at New Castle \$25."

It was this George Washington who was slowly revolving in his mind the form of an announcement to the people of the United States that he would not continue in public life after his presidential term was finished, and not the George Washington who issued his proclamation against the Whisky Insurrection and signed the Jay Treaty.

The Farewell Address was issued primarily to clear the political atmosphere by eliminating himself from the next presidential election. George

Washington, with much of the soil of America woven into his fiber, could not refrain from giving the results of his experiences in the form of hope for the future welfare of his country. The Farewell Address was George Washington's valedictory, delivered at the time he selected to make known his intention of making his exit from the great American drama, in which he had played a leading part. It was George Washington's acceptance of the world as a stage with "all the men and women merely players."

The Address was one of the many natural and sincere acts of his life. It followed the general plan outlined in his letter to Madison, four years previously. Like some of the great letters and state papers written by Washington (and the number of these is greater than is generally remembered) the authorship has been called in question by later worshipers of lesser heroes. The Farewell Address which is, beyond question, one of the great American documents, could hardly hope to escape such controversy. When Washington decided to serve a second term in the Presidency, he laid his letter and Madison's answer thereto aside until 1796 when he decided to withdraw permanently from public life. In July he sent a draft of his ideas, together with Madison's, to Alexander Hamilton with a request to dress them up in form. Hamilton complied and built up an address from Washington's and Madison's ideas with some of his own, and returned the result to Washington, who again sent it back with suggestions. Hamilton then consulted John Jay and the two dressed up what apparently was a redrafted form by Hamilton, who preferred to do this rather than alter Washington's composition. This, when examined by the President, did not please him as well as Hamilton's first draft, which was then returned to him with the request to give it a final polishing. When Washington got this back he revised it carefully and expunged many things therefrom, fair-copied it and handed it to printer Claypoole for publication. Through Claypoole's newspaper *The American Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia, the Address was first given to the people of the United States.¹

The Address announced Washington's reasons for declining to be considered again a candidate for the Presidency. His feelings did not permit him to retire without acknowledging "the debt of gratitude which I owe to my beloved country, for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me."

This support he pointed to "as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the Passions agitated in every direction were liable to mislead," it was "the essential prop" of his efforts. He then "offered the disinterested warnings of a parting friend." Those warnings were first to strengthen and hold fast the Union. The commercial interests of North, South, East and West were aptly pointed out. A burning paragraph indicted political parties which strove to acquire influence by misrepresentations. Such organizations serving to advance the interests of faction, "give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the Nation, the will of a party; often a small but artful and enterprizing minority of the community;" substituting "according to the alternate triumphs of different parties . . . the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than . . . consistent and wholesome plans digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests." He specially warned against "the spirit of innovation," upon the principles of the government, "however specious the pretexts. One method of assault may be to effect, in the form of the Constitution, alterations which will impair the energy of the system. . . . In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of Governments as of other human institutions." He urged religion and morality as indispensable supports to just government, that institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge were of primary importance and that "In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened. . . . Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens, the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake. . . . Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world" and lastly, "There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favours from Nation to Nation."

A part of the Address, it is true, concerned itself with the political situation as it then existed, but there was also a long look ahead for his "beloved country," "actuated by that fervent love towards it which is so natural to a man, who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations." And in this look into the future are warnings which, were they always borne in mind and followed, would save the

United States from many difficulties. The foundation principle of his public life, Washington had written to Knox, nearly a year before the Address was published, was that next to a conscientious discharge of public duties he considered the approbation of his fellow-citizens the highest gratification, only he could not make the former yield to the latter. If any power on earth or any power above could rear the standard of infallibility in public opinions no one would yield to it quicker than he, "But as I have found no better guide hitherto, than upright intentions and close investigation I shall adhere to those maxims, while I keep the watch; leaving it to those who will come after me, to explore new ways, if they like" and then he edged in one of his dry, satirical thrusts, "or think them better."²

The Farewell Address published and Washington definitely removed from consideration as a candidate, the seething political passions which had been so busy endeavoring to undermine and destroy his political availability forthwith exhibited new frenzy in a dozen different directions. The result of the presidential election shows a condition far from political unity. John Adams was elected president with seventy-one electoral votes and Thomas Jefferson, of the opposite party, was vice-president with sixty-eight. The fury of political faction against Washington lost something of its edge by the announcement of his withdrawal, yet there remained enough of the hatreds engendered to give point and force to continued attacks upon him. Nevertheless he went steadily onward and in his last annual message to Congress emphasized the need of building up a navy, instituting a military academy, encouraging manufacturing and agriculture, and establishing a national university.

Washington's feelings on leaving the chair of government are described by himself:

To the weary traveller, who sees a resting-place, and is bending his body to lean thereon, I now compare myself; but to be suffered to do *this* in peace, is too much to be endured by *some*. To misrepresent my motives, to reprobate my politics, and to weaken the confidence which has been reposed in my administration, are objects, which cannot be relinquished by those who will be satisfied by nothing short of a change in our political system.³

On March third, he gave a public dinner, at which were the President

and Vice-President elect and many other officials. Bishop White, one of the guests, has left this anecdote.

During the dinner much hilarity prevailed; but on the removal of the cloth it was put an end to by the President, certainly without design. Having filled his glass, he addressed the company, with a smile on his countenance . . . "Ladies and gentlemen, this is the last time I shall drink your health as a public man. I do it with sincerity, and wishing you all possible happiness." There was an end of all pleasantry. . . . [The Bishop] accidentally directed his eye to the lady of the British minister (Mrs. Liston) and tears were running down her cheeks.⁴

Washington was present at the inauguration of his successor and afterward visited President Adams and wished him a happy, successful and honorable Administration. He left Philadelphia for Mount Vernon March ninth, "got home without accident" and though the attentions met with on the road were very flattering, he avoided them wherever he had previous knowledge of the intention of the citizens to parade or furnish an escort.

I find myself [he wrote to McHenry from Mount Vernon] in the situation nearly of a young beginner; for although I have not houses to build (except one which I must erect for the accommodation and security of my Military, Civil, and private Papers, which are voluminous and may be interesting) yet I have not one, or scarcely anything else about me that does not require considerable repairs. In a word I am already surrounded by Joiners, Masons, Painters, &c., &c.; and such is my anxiety to get out of their hands, that I have scarcely a room to put a friend into, or to sit in myself, without the music of hammers, or the oderiferous smell of paint.⁵

And in another letter to McHenry he paints another picture of himself:

I begin my diurnal course with the sun; that, if my hirelings are not in their places at that time I send them messages expressive of my sorrow for their indisposition [Here is the old satiric touch] that having put these wheels in motion, I examine the state of things fur-

ther, and the more they are probed the deeper I find the wounds which my buildings have sustained by an absence and neglect of eight years; by the time I have accomplished these matters breakfast (a little after seven o'clock, about the time I presume you are taking leave of Mrs. McHenry), is ready; that, this being over, I mount my horse and ride around my farms, which employs me until it is time to dress for dinner, at which I rarely miss seeing strange faces, come as they say out of respect for me. Pray, would not the word curiosity answer as well? And how different this from having a few social friends at a cheerful board!

(On July 30, 1785, he had even then noted that dinner on that day was the first time there were no visitors, since he "retired from public life.")

The usual time of sitting at table, a walk and tea, brings me within the dawn of candlelight; previous to which, if not prevented by company, I resolve, that, as soon as the glimmering taper supplies the place of the great luminary, I will retire to my writing-table and acknowledge the letters I have received; but when the lights are brought, I feel tired and disinclined to engage in this work, conceiving that the next night will do as well. The next comes, and with it the same causes for postponement, and effect, and so on . . . having given you the history of a day, it will serve for a year. . . . I have not looked into a book since I came home; nor shall I be able to do it until I have discharged my workmen, probably not before the nights grow longer, when possibly I may be looking into the Doomsday-Book.⁶

He, nevertheless, was particular in charging Colonel Clement Biddle to attend to the binding and sending to Mount Vernon the *Encyclopædia*, which with the above remark to McHenry, is but added evidence to the already noticed reading habit of Washington. The postponement of letter-writing too, confirms the point that, although George Washington has left thousands of letters, he did not enjoy letter-writing; that he wrote only such as duty or politeness demanded. He had the draftsman's liking though, for making those letters, written out in his own hand, into a balanced picture and many of them are beautiful specimens. But one thing he did not write to McHenry, he wrote to David Humphreys (his old aide-

de-camp whom he had hoped would be a companion with him at Mount Vernon in his later days) and that was that he did not intend to allow the political broils of the country to disturb his retirement and ease. "I shall view things," he wrote, "in the calm light of mild philosophy."⁷

To make and sell a little flour annually [he wrote to another friend], to repair houses going fast to ruin, to build one for the security of my papers of a public nature, and to amuse myself in agricultural and rural pursuits, will constitute employment for the few years I have to remain on this terrestrial globe.⁸

Yet now and again the old fire blazed out, though "the calm light of mild philosophy" turned it into a laugh, when he found the men who had attacked him and his Administration, on the ground that he was ignoring the Constitution and the laws, "all of a sudden become the warm advocates of those high-handed measures of the French Directory . . . and this too without *denying* that the barriers of the constitution under which they acted, have been *overleaped*, but that they have done it on the ground of *tender mercy* and an unwillingness to shed blood." This, after the hysterical rage and fury with which they had assailed him, appeared to the retired President as laughable. "But so it always has been," he calmly admitted, "and I presume ever will be with men who are governed more by passion and party views, than by the dictates of justice, temperance and sound policy."⁹

The political bitterness of the so-called Republicans had passed all bounds of decency where Washington was concerned. The *Aurora* of Benjamin Franklin Bache and Freneau's newspaper, the latter aided and abetted by Jefferson, abused and vilified the President in ways that aroused his hot indignation, though they could not sway him an inch from his course. Jefferson's *Anas*, which must be accepted with caution wherever Washington is mentioned, may have exaggerated the outburst of wrath in which the President is recorded as never having regretted "but once the having slipped the moment of resigning his office and that was every moment since"; but the turn of the expression is truly characteristic and there is no question of Washington's rage, and justifiable rage, at such despicable tactics. If anything more were needed to show the inex-

cusable Jeffersonian deceit and contemptible methods, it is furnished by the John Langhorne letter. This, in a feigned handwriting, is still among the Washington Manuscripts and Mr. John Nicholas's account of having seen Thomas Jefferson's servant call for and receive at the Charlottesville post-office a letter addressed in Washington's writing to Mr. John Langhorne, is conclusive enough evidence. Forgery for the purpose of tricking Washington into a possible expression of political opinion, to be used to increase the confusion and ill-feeling in the campaign of 1798, was not an honorable or even justifiable action. Nicholas was avid to expose the affair but Washington, wiser, pointed out that knowledge was one thing where proof was another, and that such a charge, unless substantiated by absolute evidence, would recoil. He doubted if absolute proof was obtainable and warned that Nicholas would "have a *persevering* phalanx to contend against."¹⁰ By the middle of 1798 Washington held no further delusions about Thomas Jefferson.

The last letter to Mrs. George William Fairfax (Sally Cary), was written from Mount Vernon shortly before the hectic days of the French War excitement began to occupy nearly all of Washington's attention. So much has been made of this letter, by deliberately insisting upon a literal construction of it, that some little attention to it is justifiable. So much excitement has been caused by a short phrase in the second paragraph that common sense is almost hysterically accused of imbecility by those who insist that George Washington had none of the instincts of a gentleman in this Sally Fairfax matter, though they readily grant his possession of all such instincts in every other case.

This letter to Sally Cary Fairfax was written because of an opportunity to send it by Bryan Fairfax, who was on the point of leaving Virginia for England, and whom Washington and Mrs. Washington visited at Mount Eagle, three days after the letter was written. With this letter of May 16, 1798, went a letter of May seventeenth from Martha Washington to Sally Cary Fairfax, which George Washington drafted for her, precisely as he drafted one for her to Mrs. Pinckney.¹¹

Washington's letter of May sixteenth is recorded in his letter-book, by his clerk, Albin Rawlins, and he also kept a press-copy of it, which is a strange practise where incriminating letters are concerned. The press-copy, of course, was taken from the finished letter and the letter-book copy

was made from the press-copy, the last paragraph of which did not "take" very well on the copying tissue and Rawlins ignored it in the letter-book. As this was over a year before Washington's death, there can be small doubt that the General saw the omission, but thought it of no consequence, as he filled in with a pencil part of the next to last paragraph of the press-copy, but let the rest go. This last indecipherable paragraph seems to have been neighborhood news, of which the following scraps can be made out: "As Occoquan these seven years"; "I am permitted to spend the"; "main here; in Peace that" and the signature was preceded by the usual established form, as "umble Serv" can be deciphered.

Had Washington's draft of this letter been preserved, instead of a press-copy of the finished product, his changes of diction might have ruined all the opportunity so joyfully pounced upon and manufactured as proof of the great love of his life. The drafts for Mrs. Washington's letters to Sally Cary and to Mrs. Pinckney show the struggle of the General to model the letters to what he thought the proper feminine form. The moot sentence in his own letter—"None of which events, however, nor all of them together, have been able to eradicate from my mind the recollection of those happy moments the happiest in my life which I have enjoyed in your company"—contains the entire matter, thirty-six words out of a total letter of over seven hundred. "It is a matter of sore regret, when I cast my eyes towards Belvoir, which I often do, to reflect, the former inhabitants of it, with whom we lived in such harmony and friendship, no longer reside there, and that the ruins can only be viewed as the memento of former pleasures." This sentence is the real thought of the letter and it repeats in different words Washington's regret that the happy visiting of the old neighborly Belvoir-Mount Vernon days was gone. And this next sentence quite clinches the matter for he had "wondered often" he wrote, "your nearest relations being in this country, that you should not prefer spending the evening of your life among them rather than close the sublunary scene in a foreign country, numerous as your acquaintances may be, and sincere as the friendships you may have formed."

George Washington's regard for Mrs. Fairfax was sincere and warm, but this letter can not be tortured into the final admission of an undying love by a man of sixty-six for a woman then over seventy, without doing violence to every character trait of the man. Such an emotion was so

foreign to Washington's character that to admit it makes it impossible to account for him in any sane analysis. The Virginia gentleman of the Revolution was an upright, high-principled idealist, and to harbor a love for the wife of his best friend is unthinkable. Such things were simply not done. Those who prefer to drag George Washington down to their own thought level by ignoring the social standards of eighteenth-century Virginia, may achieve a certain self-satisfaction thereby, but the price of that satisfaction is the impossibility of understanding or appreciating George Washington.

CHAPTER LXXIII

WAR WITH FRANCE—WASHINGTON AND ADAMS—THE “SILVER GREYS” AND OTHER DETAILS—DEATH

NEAR the end of the year 1798, James Monroe published his *View of the Conduct of the Executive of the United States*, in which he endeavored to justify his negotiations with the French Directory, wherein he exceeded his instructions and committed the United States in such wise that the sole ground, “the pivot on which our claim was fixed” Washington put it, was swept away by Monroe’s private and unauthorized avowals.¹

Through this misunderstanding Washington, at Mount Vernon, tried to remain undisturbed; but the old habit of mind and heart which placed his country’s welfare ahead of everything else did not allow him to remain submerged in his agriculture. “To expect that all men should think alike upon political more than upon Religious, or other subjects, would be to look for a change in the order of Nature,” he wrote to Joseph Hopkinson,² “but at so dangerous a crisis as the present when everything dear to Independence is at stake, the well disposed part of them might, one would think, act more alike. Opposition therefore to the major will, and to the self respect which is due to the Nation’s character, cannot but seem strange.”

But one more flurry was to interrupt the calm of Washington’s last days. The attitude of France toward the United States was becoming more and more truculent and serious trouble seemed inevitable. Washington was disturbed; but he wrote Hamilton he could not believe that France would go to the extreme of “*open war*.” He was ready with heart and hand to do anything to avert the crisis, but as there had been talk of his commanding the army, he was reluctant to act unless the popular wish be unequivocally expressed.³ The activities of the leaders of the French party in the United States were such that he wished to know the state of mind of the country and wrote to many friends to obtain reports from the various sections. Always he believed that the people would decide in the

right, but always he feared, a little, their inability to decide in time. He felt that these intense divergences of opinion were "disgraceful to the Country."

President Adams, believing that peace with France should be maintained if possible, sent over three special envoys, Charles C. Pinckney, John Marshall and Elbridge Gerry. The story of the treatment to which they were subjected is well known. They flatly rejected the bland suggestion of French agents that a United States loan to France was necessary and that a financial *douceur* be handed to certain officials. The report of this, when published in the United States, created intense excitement and Adams felt that the country should prepare for the inevitable. Arrangements were inaugurated to raise an army and increase the navy. Yielding to public expectation, Adams appointed Washington lieutenant-general and commander-in-chief of the armies raised, or to be raised, for the expected war, and Washington's feelings at being so appointed were pictured in his letter to Jonathan Trumbull:⁴

New scenes [he wrote] are opening upon us, and a very unexpected one, as respects myself is unfolding. What will be the final result of these measures is only known to that providence in whose direction all things are. When I bid adieu last to the Theatre of Public life I thought it was hardly possible that any event would arise *in my day* that would induce me to tread the Stage again. But this is an Age of Wonders, and I have once more consented to become an Actor in the Great Drama.

The Revolutionary War mind was again awake. "That providence in whose direction all things are" was again appealed to as America, young and untried, headed as Washington thought, for war and in war he knew anything could happen. And again public life became a stage and public men actors, for the stage and life were very closely akin in the mind of George Washington. It was with no great amount of enthusiasm that President Adams saw himself again eclipsed in the public attention.

Washington accepted the appointment with the proviso that he would not be called upon to take the field until the army was actually formed, or circumstances rendered his presence necessary. He also insisted upon Alexander Hamilton's being appointed his second in command. Upon

Hamilton's vigor, younger strength and energy he could rely and, what was more important, Washington knew that Hamilton would not play him false. To Adams this development was gall and wormwood and he did his best to avoid it by supporting Knox for the position. To have the man he considered as having prevented him from being the first president of the United States, again filling the public eye and thought, while he, John Adams, occupied the highest office in the land, was depressing. He wrote to Benjamin Rush, who had been one of the outer fringe of the Conway Cabal, that he, Adams, was only a viceroy under Washington and the same under Hamilton. As affairs developed and Knox refused to serve under Hamilton, Adams dated Knox's commission so as to place him ahead of the New Yorker. Washington delivered his ultimatum that Hamilton must be next to him, or he would decline to serve, and Adams capitulated. Then came the old, old Revolutionary War discordance. Adams showed unmistakable signs of still believing in the short-term enlistment; he developed a firm faith in his diplomatic powers to settle the trouble with France without war (although French and American ships were already firing broadsides into each other on sight), and lost all interest in the raising of an army. Washington, disgusted, scored James McHenry, another of his old Revolutionary War aides, but now Secretary of War, and McHenry passed the blame for the dilatory actions to the Treasury Department.

France would be unable, having then a war with England on her hands, to send an expedition against the United States. If an expedition did succeed in getting through the British naval blockade of the French coast Washington was sure it would be directed against one of the southern states; but the immediate chances of this were remote.

The selection of officers for the needed army was a difficult task and Washington did not believe that an efficient organization could be built up from the old Revolutionary Army officers. He stressed the need of a young and energetic general staff, and in his letters to Pickering and McHenry outlined the general plan of the needed organization.

An unexpected and, to Washington, most unfortunate result of his appointment as commander-in-chief was the sudden disgruntlement of Henry Knox, who objected to being placed third on the list, rather than next to Washington himself. His letter to Washington filled the General's

mind with "disquietude and perplexity in the extreme" for, among other complaints, Knox reared the old ghost of New England jealousy of place. President Adams showed the existence of the same feeling in his letter to the Secretary of War, August 4, 1798: "The five New England States will not patiently submit to the humiliation that has been meditated for them." This, in the light of the plain facts of the matter, was a captious absurdity. Washington's reply to Knox⁸ held a tone of weariness at encountering again the Revolutionary War bugbear. "I hope in God," he wrote, "that at no other time, much less the present, when everything sacred and dear is threatened that local distinctions and little jealousies will be done away." He confessed to Hamilton that he had put Charles Cotesworth Pinckney ahead of Knox, under the impression that the South would be the scene of conflict and that Pinckney's reputation there would bring out recruits more readily. The situation was awkward, but Washington's frank, firm letter to the President and his equally frank letter to Knox settled the matter. To Adams he wrote that there was "no one whom I have loved more sincerely [than Knox] nor for whom I have had a greater friendship. But esteem, love and friendship can have no influence on my mind when I conceive that the subjugation of our government and independence are the objects aimed at by the enemies of our Peace, and when possibly our all is at stake."⁸

This was not an exaggeration on Washington's part. Fifteen years after the Revolution, the intensity of that struggle remained only with those who had borne a part in it and, just as our Civil War for years dwarfed everything else in the minds of the men who fought in it, so the independence won by the Revolution was to George Washington the vital and important thing. He expressed his views to Lafayette in a Christmas-Day letter, on the conduct of France, whose plan he believed to be, when it found the United States Government resolved on neutrality, "to destroy the confidence of the people in and to separate them from it; for which purpose their diplomatic agents were specially instructed, and in the attempt were aided by inimical characters among ourselves, not, as I observed before, because they loved France more than any other nation but because it was an instrument to facilitate the destruction of their own government." This, of course, was not the purpose of the Jeffersonian party, and that the Republican element would have destroyed the govern-

ment, had it the power, is at least a matter of opinion; but it is easy to understand how Washington thought as he did and it is easy to see substantial, though not complete justification for his thought. It was the conflict of a theory of government which based its reasonings upon human nature as it ought to be, while Washington reasoned from hard bitter experience, with human nature as it was.

Washington went to Philadelphia to consult the government on army matters the latter part of 1798 and while there he dined with Robert Morris and his family, November twenty-seventh, in the debtor's apartment of the old Walnut Street prison, where the ex-financier was then in duress from his financial difficulties. George Washington's friendship was not of the fair-weather variety and he had for Morris a sincere liking.

The preparations of the United States for war were not without an influence upon France for, aside from the materialistic side of actual conflict, the effect upon the French people of a war with the only other republic then in the world was worth considering by the French Directory. The chances of war speedily diminished and before the troops of the Provisional Army of the United States, as it was called, took the field the trouble was at an end. Washington's accounts show the receipt of two payments from the United States Treasury, during the months that he and Hamilton were struggling with appointments and organization plans for the army. November 7, 1798, "To two months pay, Rations and forage recd. from the public by Warrant from the Secty of War \$1080.50" and January 15, 1799: "To Cash rec'd on a warrant from the War Office for pay, subsistence and forage for the month of October \$523.20." Two hundred dollars of this pay went to David Rees, for a splendid "cream colored Narragansett horse" which probably was the war-steed of the General for the brief period during which war seemed likely. Another pleasing little item of expense during this exciting time is the note of one hundred dollars sent to James McHenry with the request that he procure two handsome standards for the Alexandria Silver Greys. Mrs. Washington and Nelly Custis presented these flags, which were of white silk with an azure device on a blue field, in which the American eagle figured with arrows and olive branch and also a medallion portrait, which Claypoole's newspaper reported as of General Washington and later, corrected it as having been intended for President Adams. The Silver Greys

were a home guard organization of middle-aged men, which George Washington, with a bit of smile, called the "Greyheads."

The dreaded yellow fever again broke out in Philadelphia in the summer of 1798 and again George Washington sent a contribution to the board of public health of the city, this time two hundred dollars, to help alleviate the distress.

On February 11, 1799, Alexandria celebrated Washington's birthday with more than usual patriotism, because of conditions in the country. The militia paraded, the Silver Greys doubtless bore their standards with pride, but we have no information that the Commander-in-Chief rode the cream-colored Narrangansett horse. The festivities ended with what Washington described as "an elegant Ball and Supper at Night."

The last year of Washington's life was a curious mixture of private and public business, in clearing up the affairs of the Provisional Army and attending to the management of Mount Vernon: "Six days do I labor," he wrote to James McHenry, April 23, 1799, "or, in other words take exercise and devote my time to various occupations in Husbandry, and about my mansion. On the seventh, now called the first day, for want of a place of Worship (within less than nine miles) such letters as do not require immediate acknowledgment I give answers to (Mr. Lear being sick and absent)."

Later in the year he did what he had never expected to do again and that was to travel more than a dozen miles from Mount Vernon. He visited the encampment of the Provisional Army at Harper's Ferry and went to Philadelphia, the then seat of government, to consult upon and arrange army matters. These were the last journeys of Washington's life.

Yet one more official note may be added as belonging to the last months of that life. On September 15, 1799, he expressed the opinion to Alexander Hamilton that if the British kept armed vessels on the Great Lakes the United States would have to do the same, "but in time of peace a better way, in my opinion is for neither to have any."

The war situation improved and each week saw the chance of hostilities lessening. Washington's thought and interest returned more and more to the management of Mount Vernon. It had become clear to him that he had more working negroes than could be employed to advantage in a farming system and he would not become a planter. To sell his surplus

slaves he could not, because he was "principled against this kind of traffic in the human species. To hire them out, is almost as bad, because they could not be disposed of in families to any advantage and to disperse the families I have an aversion." Something had to be done or he would be ruined. All he had made by crops, rents and land sold in the past four years, to the amount of fifty thousand dollars "has scarcely been able to keep me afloat." But he moved steadily ahead, endeavoring by greater care and system, to find an answer to the problem.

The end came unexpectedly and suddenly. On December twelfth, he rode out on his usual round of farm inspection and it came on to rain soon after, with snow and sleet. When the General returned his hair and shoulders were wet and icy, to which he paid no attention. The next day, Friday, he seemed as well as usual, but a heavy snow kept him from visiting his farms, though in the afternoon he went out and marked some trees, between the house and the river, which he desired to cut down. That evening, the thirteenth, he became very hoarse and complained of a sore throat and on Saturday, about two or three o'clock in the morning he woke Mrs. Washington and told her he was very ill. He could hardly speak, but he would not let her get up for fear she would take cold. By daylight the household was aroused. Dr. James Craik, Dr. Elisha Cullen Dick and Dr. Gustavus Richard Brown, attended him; but after nearly twenty-four hours of struggle for breath he died at eleven-thirty P.M., Saturday, December 14, 1799.

The story of Washington's last illness and death has been set down in detail by Tobias Lear and the signed statement of two of the attending physicians (Doctors Craik and Dick). Dr. William Brown, of Alexandria, a long-time friend, was sent for but was away from home at the time; Dr. Gustavus Brown, of Port Tobacco, was summoned in his stead. The malady was diagnosed as "an inflammatory affection of the upper part of the windpipe, called in technical language, *Cynache Trachealis*." Albin Rawlins, on the insistence of the General, took from him twelve to fourteen ounces of blood, before any of the physicians arrived. When they did, two more "pretty copious bleedings" were given, in the first of which thirty-two ounces of blood were taken. Mrs. Washington was opposed to these bleedings and so was Doctor Dick. Washington himself seems to have been impressed from the beginning of his illness that it would prove fatal.

Curiously enough, the last letters written by George Washington were typical of his entire life. On December twelfth, he wrote to Alexander Hamilton upon the public business of the army; on December thirteenth, he wrote to his overseer, James Anderson, a letter on farm matters and, the evening of December thirteenth, his very last writing was an entry in his diary of the weather for that day.

Though many eulogies have been delivered in honor of George Washington, the greatest and simplest of them all was uttered by the wife of his heart, when he breathed his last: "All is now over," said Martha Washington. "I have no more trials to pass through. I shall soon follow him."

In less than two and a half years this prophecy was fulfilled.

THE END

APPENDIX

NOTES

CHAPTER I

¹Washington himself had so little interest in the matter that he referred the request to his sister-in-law, Hannah Bushrod, widow of his brother John Augustine. She supplied the above details in her letter of April ninth, which Washington copied *verbatim*, with the addition of a minor point or two from his own personal knowledge.

²From a Washington family Bible, preserved at Mount Vernon. According to this record George Washington was born at ten A.M. It was from Mrs. Roger (Mildred Washington) Gregory, George Washington's godmother, that his father purchased the original twenty-five hundred acres on Little Hunting Creek, which afterward became known as Mount Vernon.

³Entirely too much has been taken for granted in the matter of Washington's schooling. Careful sifting fails to establish the fact that he ever attended a regular school and there is fully as much logic in the assumption that George was taught the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic at home, by his father, as there is that he rode or walked to a school that can not be identified. The "convict" schoolmaster Hobby is the fertile imagination of the Reverend Mason Locke Weems, of the "I-can-not-tell-a-lie" and cherry-tree fame; and this "convict" story was repeated with gusto by another Reverend Church of England minister, the embittered Jonathan Boucher, to be recited parrotlike by later writers who did not see the spleen of an individual who had failed, first to persuade Washington to approve his scheme of traveling through Europe with and at the expense of John Parke Custis, and, next, who had had his clerical living taken from him by the Revolutionary War, in which the driving force was this same John Parke Custis guardian, who had declined to approve the proposed junketing tour. It is necessary only to read Boucher's letters to Washington and then his memoir, with its many ridiculous errors of fact, to understand Boucher. The serious research that tried to identify Hobby with William Grove only served to confuse the matter, for there is yet to be produced one good reason for undertaking such research. The part of the Reverend James Marye, in the story, lacks healthy confirmatory evidence and the school of the elusive Mr. Williams is fully as nebulous. Charles Moore's edition of the *Rules of Civility* disposes of Conway's theory of Marye's connection with the *Rules* and, being separated from the *Rules*, Marye becomes *ipso facto*, separated from his position as a teacher of George Washington.

⁴The physical feats and studious attributes fit well into the Washington tradition, but these tales and the silver dollar, or stone, thrown across the Rappahannock, need better evidence than can now be adduced. The "romping" anecdote, for example, requires proof that the school that Washington attended was a mixed one, before this story secures a reasonable foundation. As the school itself can not be identified, it is obviously absurd to take for granted that both boys and girls attended it, until the history of education in colonial Virginia is much better known than it is at present.

⁵It may have been of these covers that Washington Irving wrote in his *Life of Washington*, when he described Washington's school-books as being decorated with "nondescript birds, executed with a flourish of the pen, or profiles of faces." The practise of keeping a written record of the lessons taught not only created a text-book, when printed text-books were scarce, but furnished a written record of the scholar's progress and a means of review. It combined, too, training in writing, in neatness, and was a check upon spelling. The writing-up of such school exercises was an early teaching practise in the southern and western states of which some examples as late as 1812 have survived.

⁶It can not be claimed that there is proof that George Washington was taught entirely by his father and half-brother; but the probability of this, from the internal evidence in the school exercises, the lack of educational facilities in colonial Virginia and the long established custom of educating the children at home, by tutor or otherwise, is stronger presumptive evidence than the unsupported statements by which George Washington has been connected with various schools and teachers.

¹⁰There has been much controversy over the origin of these Rules, but Charles Moore's edition of them (Houghton Mifflin, 1926) presents the proper view. They were adapted by Francis Hawkins in his *Youth's Behavior* from an old French Jesuit publication and though many of them sound crude to us to-day, their underlying principle is that of polite consideration for others, which is a safe social foundation for any society at any age.

¹¹Diary, May 26, 1791.

¹²*"Bienveillance de la Conversation entre les Hommes"* 1595 by the *pensionnaires* of the French Jesuit College of La Flèche. Sent to their brothers at Pont-à-Mousson. Father Perin translated the Maxims into Latin which appeared at Pont-à-Mousson in 1617. Republished in Spanish, German and Bohemian. A French edition appeared in Paris as early as 1640. Francis Hawkins published an English translation in London in 1640, a second edition in 1646 and nine editions before 1672.

¹³Published by George Simpson Eddy, New York, 1928.

¹⁴Sclavoni was between what was Hungary and Bosnia, before the European war changed the long established boundaries.

¹⁵"Ye Flood Janais" is the same as the River Don, which is approximately thirteen hundred miles in length. It is curious that Washington's teacher did not seem to be aware of the existence of the Volga River, but a short distance to the east of the Don and double its size and sweep. The Volga was known to English geographers at the time, but it is possible that Washington's instructor confused the two rivers and considered them as one and the same.

¹⁶Mogul is now northern India and the islands thereof, which were known as the East India Islands, or the East Indies, included what is now Burma, Siam, the islands of the Malay Peninsula and the Peninsula itself. Tartaria, of course, was a vague Siberia.

¹⁷Monomotapa included what is now Bechuanaland, Cape Colony and the Orange Free State; St. Thomas Island is placed, in the old geographies, as west of Æthiopia and Cape Verde Islands were west of old Negro Land.

¹⁸Evidently it was not generally known in the 1740s that California was not an island.

¹⁹*Benjamin Franklin's Account Books*, G. S. Eddy, New York, 1928, Vol. II, p. 98.

²⁰*Washington to the Mayor and Commonality of Fredericksburg, Virginia*, February 14, 1784. The exact value of Mary Washington's influence upon her eldest son, is difficult to appraise. She could have contributed nothing to his school training, being possessed of little beyond the elementals herself. The best evidence we possess is the filial duty always fulfilled by Washington toward her. This was so much beyond the minimum that it is not difficult to attribute to her the foundations of the self-discipline and iron fortitude so conspicuous in George Washington's character.

CHAPTER II

¹Fairfax County was carved out of Prince William and this Little Hunting Creek property became known as Mount Vernon.

²Including Lawrence and Augustine, by his first marriage.

³It is not generally remembered that the Honorable Edward Vernon, Vice-Admiral of the Blue, from whom Lawrence Washington named his home on the Potomac, also has the distinction of having created the famous navy tiple known as "grog." The Admiral was firmly convinced that the ration of rum issued to the British seamen was too powerful a stimulant; he therefore, in the interest of physical efficiency on his own ship and in his own fleet (it is not entirely disbelieved that a commercial interest did not enter into the matter), cut the rum ration in half and added water to make up the required volume. The doughty Admiral had a propensity for wearing tight yellow breeches of a material known as grogram and the sailors in disgust and contempt for the weakened stimulant called it "old Groggrams"; in the course of time it shortened to "old Grog" and finally "grog," so that long after the origin of the term had been forgotten, the navy rum ration was known as "grog."

⁴Joseph Ball to Mary Washington, May 19, 1747, survives in the original Ball letter book, from which it was printed in Hayden's *Genealogies* and reprinted in various other publications.

The letter from William Fairfax to Mary Washington, regarding George's education, which is so naïvely printed in various places, is spurious. It was cannily composed by Weir Mitchell for his *Youth of Washington*, but with no thought of its being taken for anything other than what it was; a colorful picture that *could* have been true.

¹Much has been made of this intimacy and friendship, but some emphasis has been too heavily placed. The friendship between George Washington and Ann Fairfax Washington has been overlooked and by centering attention upon her sister-in-law, Sally Cary Fairfax, to the exclusion of every one else, Sally has been made to assume a disproportionate importance.

²Genn was the responsible man of the party, responsible not only for the accuracy of the surveys and tenantry lines, but also for the safety of the two younger men. It is rather a strain upon common sense to consider it otherwise.

³Diary, March 15, 1748.

CHAPTER III

¹These loan entries are to be found in Washington's Account Book, 1747-49, in the possession of Lloyd W. Smith, of New York. Most of the entries therein have been transferred to Washington's Ledger A, *Washington Papers*, Library of Congress, and lest some carping critic may ask an insinuating question, it should be added that the entries of repayments of these loans show clearly that no interest was charged.

²*Writings*, Bicentennial Edition, Vol. I, p. 17.

³This young lady, of whom Washington wrote practically the same thoughts in three different letters, was, he tells us, Mary Cary, daughter of Col. Wilson Miles Cary, of "Ceelys" on the James River. If these letters are to be considered as anything more than practise exercises it will be necessary to bring Mary Cary to Greenway Court and keep George Washington there while he is, at the same time, surveying on the Lost River or the Potomac. The difficulty is obvious and in this light, the many laborious attempts to identify these girls seem rather absurd.

CHAPTER IV

¹Lawrence Washington was adjutant of one of the Virginia military districts. George had already made arrangements for forwarding the adjutant pay to Lawrence in Barbadoes.

CHAPTER V

¹There is no evidence in the Washington Manuscripts that Van Braam ever gave Washington fencing lessons.

²Diary, November 15, 1755.

³The Half-King was so called from his owing only a partial allegiance to the council of the Six Nations.

⁴No items of expense of the journey to the French Commandant have come to light and it is supposed that these accounts, which included the hire of men and horses, provisions and sundry items such as Queen Aliquippa's match-coat and bottle of rum, were handled by Dinwiddie.

CHAPTER VI

¹To Richard Corbin, March, 1754.

²Washington to Dinwiddie, April 25, 1754.

³Washington to Governor Horatio Sharpe, April 27, 1754.

⁴Washington to Dinwiddie, May 27, 1754.

⁵Washington to Dinwiddie, May 18, 1754.

⁶Dinwiddie to Washington, May 25, 1754.

⁷Diary, May 27, 1754.

⁸Washington to Fry, May 29, 1754. Fry died two days after receiving this letter.

CHAPTER VII

¹May 29, 1754.

²This misconception is explained in the *Writings of Washington*, Bicentennial Edition, Vol.

I, pp. 89-90, *note*. The only reasonable construction is the translation that when the English returned to Fort Necessity to get their baggage and personal belongings, which they were allowed to secrete or bury, they were not to rebuild or erect any defensive work on the site, or on that side of the mountains, for the space of one year.

CHAPTER IX

¹Washington's copy of Braddock's Orders.

²Several thousand pounds sterling Washington was carrying to Braddock. Sally Cary Fairfax had lent him one of her horses to speed his journey, which was a friendly and patriotic act.

³Washington to John Augustine Washington, May 28, 1755.

⁴Washington to Mrs. George William Fairfax, May 14, 1755.

⁵Washington to William Fairfax, June 7, 1755.

⁶Washington to Dinwiddie, July 18, 1755.

⁷Washington to Mary Washington, July 18, 1755.

CHAPTER X

¹Circular of August 2, 1755.

²The Legislature voted him three hundred pounds reimbursement for his losses of baggage and equipment.

³Washington to Warner Lewis, August 14, 1755.

⁴Washington to Charles Lewis, August 14, 1755.

⁵Washington to Dinwiddie, October 11, 1755.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷January 14, 1756.

⁸The fact that Mary Philipse was an heiress and considered a belle has been seized upon by over-enthusiastic detractors as an opportunity to demonstrate George Washington's failure as a gallant, and this in the face of an entire absence of documentary evidence of any kind that either the New York heiress or the Virginia Colonel were mutually interested. The letters so confidently excerpted as proving an interest, demonstrate nothing of the kind and the ridiculousness of the fable becomes apparent when the matter is examined.

⁹*Writings of Washington*, Bicentennial Edition, Vol. I, p. 297, *note*.

¹⁰Washington to John Robinson, April 7, 1756.

¹¹Washington to Dinwiddie, April 7, 1756.

¹²April 18, 1755.

¹³The last one I have noted is Number XVI. The entire series seems to have had the purpose of directing public attention to the *Gazette* in an effort to increase the circulation of that paper.

¹⁴Washington to Loudoun, January, 1757.

¹⁵See Washington to Dinwiddie, April 24, 1756.

CHAPTER XI

¹Washington to Loudoun, January, 1757.

²See S. M. Hamilton, *Letters to Washington*, Vol. II, p. 44.

³Washington never wore a wig, but arranged his own hair, powdered and arranged as was the prevailing fashion.

⁴Washington to Robinson, June 10, 1757.

CHAPTER XII

¹Washington to John Robinson, July 10, 1757.

²Washington to Stanwix, July 15, 1757.

³Washington to Dinwiddie, August 27, 1757.

⁴Washington to Dinwiddie, September 17, 1757.

⁵Speaker John Robinson to Washington, November 3, 1757.

CHAPTER XIII

¹Washington was given this complimentary title as the Virginia troops had now been divided into two regiments; the veterans were mostly retained in the First and the Second Regiment was formed from the new recruits.

²While it probably was known that Washington had been paying Mrs. Custis attention, we do not know that the news of their engagement was common property. The bracketed portions are paraphrases by the author.

CHAPTER XV

¹This renders Wirt's highly colored description a somewhat doubtful fact, as the bald official record interferes with the details of his picturesque account.

²On September 20, 1765, a good violin for John Parke Custis was ordered and was received in 1766. It cost two guineas, and a supply of extra strings was ordered. Also a fine German flute with tipped and silvered keys was obtained. This violin and flute account for the persistence of the story that Washington played these instruments, despite his letter to Francis Hopkinson, February 5, 1789, in which he said that he could not play a note upon a single musical instrument.

³See J. B. Nolan's *George Washington and the Town of Reading* (1931), p. 122.

CHAPTER XVI

¹The saddle ordered was of doeskin, silver-mounted, with silk stitched seat, silver breast-plate and silver buckles. A fine "blew" saddle cloth with white border served to set it off and the whole cost £4:16:6.

²Ledger A, September 13, 1760.

³To Richard Washington, August 10, 1760.

⁴February 15, 1773.

CHAPTER XVII

¹The story of Washington being knocked down in an election controversy lacks documentary confirmation. It is one of those traditional embellishments which have been largely responsible for making the Father of his Country appear a hopeless prig. It is hardly conceivable that a man who did not return a blow could retain the respect of a rough frontier element. Yet Washington did retain that respect, as his several reelections to the House of Burgesses proves.

CHAPTER XVIII

¹To Francis Dandridge, September 20, 1765.

CHAPTER XX

¹Roy Bird Cook's *Washington's Western Lands* (Strasburg: 1930) is the best full account known to me. Washington's own diaries, of course, are the only source of information as to the journey itself.

CHAPTER XXI

¹The last order for snuff I have found was in 1775 before his appointment as commander-in-chief and the last snuff-box was purchased in 1773. Snuff-taking is a leisurely habit and Washington had no leisure after June 15, 1775.

²George Mercer, Doctor Thacher, John Laurens and William Sullivan.

³Just how the idea started that Washington studied Simes's work on military tactics ex-

clusively, is hard to say. The Philadelphia printer, Robert Aitken, reprinted Thomas Simes's *Military Guide for Young Officers*, which was a London publication of 1772, in June, 1775, and sent one of the first copies off the press, to General Washington. He did this hastily without waiting to print a title-page, so wrote one out with a pen. Perhaps the glamour attendant upon this hasty gift has unduly emphasized the volume.

CHAPTER XXII

¹John V. Weylie to Washington, March 11, 1789.

CHAPTER XXIII

¹Thomas Lynch's account as recorded in John Adams's diary for August 31, 1774.

CHAPTER XXIV

¹Burnett, *Letters of Members of Congress*, Vol. I, pp. 156-57.

²The copy of this speech in the Papers of the Continental Congress, being in the writing of Edmund Pendleton (with the few words within the brackets interlined by Washington) does not strengthen John Adams's statement that Pendleton was opposed to Washington's appointment.

³To Martha Washington, June 18, 1775.

⁴August 20, 1775.

⁵General Orders, July 11, 1775.

CHAPTER XXV

¹Washington stated, in his letter to Captain Caleb Gibbs, April 22, 1777, that buff and blue was his uniform.

²Washington to Congress, July 10, 1775.

³Washington to Congress, July 20, 1775.

⁴General Orders, August tenth.

CHAPTER XXVI

¹Washington to Schuyler, June 25, 1775.

CHAPTER XXVII

¹Washington to Hancock, July 21, 1775.

²General Orders, August 5, 1775.

CHAPTER XXVIII

¹Washington to the Major and brigadier-generals, September 8, 1775.

²Washington to Trumbull, September 8, 1775.

³Washington to John Augustine Washington, September 10, 1775.

⁴Washington to Congress, September 21, 1775.

⁵*London Evening Post*, October 7, 1775.

CHAPTER XXIX

¹Washington to the Massachusetts Legislature, November 29, 1775.

²Trumbull to Eliphalet Dyer, September 23, 1775.

³Of the orders against swearing, the best known are those of August 3, 1776. Others were issued October 21, 1778, and July 29, 1779.

CHAPTER XXX

¹Washington to Congress, October 12, 1775.

²Due to Washington's activity a small number of privateers was fitted out and sent to sea. These were known as "Washington Fleet" and they were the beginning of the Continental Navy.

³Washington to Massachusetts Legislature, October 27, and November 2, 1775.

⁴General Orders, November 6, 1775.

CHAPTER XXXI

¹General Orders, November 28, 1775.

²General Orders, May 8, 1778.

CHAPTER XXXII

¹Washington to President of Congress, November 28, 1775.

²Burnett's Letters of Members of Congress, Vol. I, p. 253.

³Washington to John Augustine Washington, July 27, 1775.

⁴Washington to Congress, December 4, 1775.

CHAPTER XXXIII

¹Washington to Joseph Reed, December 15, 1775.

²General Orders, January 1, 1776.

³Washington to Reed, January 4, 1776.

⁴Washington to Reed, February 7, 1776.

⁵Washington to Congress, February 9, 1776.

CHAPTER XXXIV

¹Here again is a glimpse of Washington, the reader. Pope's "Essay on Man" was precisely the kind of thing that would appeal to him.

²Washington to John Augustine Washington, March 31, 1776.

CHAPTER XXXV

¹*History of the United States*, Vol. III, Chapter IX.

²General Orders, June sixteenth.

³Washington to Congress, June 28, 1776.

CHAPTER XXXVII

¹William Alexander, of New Jersey, who though entitled to the earldom of Stirling was denied that title by the House of Lords, the main influence seeming to have been Alexander's Americanism. He was always called Lord Stirling by the Americans.

²Johnston's *Campaign of 1776*, Long Island Historical Society, mistakenly attributes these orders to Washington. In reality they were, but they were issued by Putnam.

³Tallmadge's *Memoir*.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

¹September 6, 1776.

CHAPTER XXXIX

¹Knowlton is the officer who is said to have accepted the volunteer services of Captain Nathan Hale to enter the British lines. No evidence is available that Washington ever saw Hale, or knew anything about him, until after he was executed by the British, and the one

reference to the matter found in Washington's letters is strong negative evidence that the story that Hale saw Washington and received his orders personally before starting on his ill-starred venture is but another of the many sentimental imaginings with which the history of our Revolution is unnecessarily disfigured,

²Washington to Congress, September 20, 1776.

³"To attempt to introduce discipline and subordination into a new army must always be a work of much difficulty, but where the principles of democracy so universally prevail, where so great an equality and so thorough a levelling spirit predominates, either no discipline can be established, or he who attempts it must become odious and detestable, a position which no one will choose. It is impossible for any one to have an idea of the complete equality which exists between the officers and men who composed the greater part of our troops." *Joseph Reed to Esther* (his wife), October 11, 1776.

CHAPTER XL

¹By the middle of the year 1777, Washington recognized this: "I begin to consider Lines a kind of trap and not to answer the valuable purposes expected from them. Unless they are on passes that cannot be avoided by the enemy."—*To Schuyler*, July 22, 1777.

²Washington to Congress, November 14, 1776.

³Reed to Lee, November 21, 1776. *Correspondence of Joseph Reed*.

CHAPTER XLI

¹Despite many endeavors to give Colonel Reed a prominent place in the Trenton maneuver, he had practically no part in it. His officious letter to Washington of December twenty-second, instead of connecting importantly with the action is evidence that Washington had not confided to Reed the full details of the project he had already formed. The Commander-in-Chief was too good a judge of men not to have taken Reed's measure from his inexcusable letter to Lee. Reed was not present at Trenton and his advice to Cadwalader after that battle shows very little evidence of the military ability claimed for him.

²Washington to Congress, December 29, 1776.

³Washington to Morris, December 30, 1776.

⁴Washington to Congress, December 29, 1776.

⁵Washington to Morris, Clymer and Walton, January 1, 1777.

⁶This letter is reported by the Huntington Library to be "incomplete and also damaged." The words in brackets have been supplied as the possible readings. The recipient is unidentified, but probably was one of the New Jersey delegates to Congress or a state official.

⁷Dandridge to Washington, January 16, 1777, *Washington Papers*.

CHAPTER XLII

¹To Benedict Arnold, February 20, 1777.

²To John Augustine Washington, February 24, 1777.

³Washington to Congress, January 19, 1777.

⁴February 24, 1777.

CHAPTER XLIII

¹To John Armstrong, July 4, 1777.

CHAPTER XLIV

¹Washington to Governor Rutledge, July 5, 1777.

²Washington to Gates, July 30, 1777.

³Courts of inquiry both on the Long Island and Brandywine affairs cleared Sullivan; but the fact remains that though juries of his peers exculpated him of negligence, the enemy won both victories by outwitting him.

CHAPTER XLV

¹The de Broglie scheme was for France to persuade or insist that Comte de Broglie be made commander-in-chief of the American Armies and that Washington be subordinate to him, in return for France's aid. De Broglie was an important adherent of the Choiseul party in France (which had been displaced by Maurepas and Vergennes) and which was maneuvering to regain governmental control in France. This American scheme was a part of the struggle. As a story of French politics the matter is too complicated and leads too far afield from the American Revolution to deserve more than a mention; but mention must be made because of the complications it caused in America. Much of the difficulty caused by Ducoudray arose from the fact that this trouble-making officer was a protégé of the Choiseul faction. It is to be remembered that Baron de Kalb had been sent to America as an observer, prior to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, by the de Broglie influence, which was then in power in France.

CHAPTER XLVII

¹Burnett, *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, Vol. II, p. 383.

²This is the same house that is generally known as the Isaac Pott's house, but the rental for the use of the house and furniture was paid to Deborah Hewes, the day the Continentals broke camp and started in pursuit of the British across Jersey. The receipt is in the writing of Lieutenant-Colonel Tench Tilghman, then an aide to Washington.

³Adams's idea was to have every general officer below the Commander-in-Chief annually elected, and it is hard to disbelieve that this was but another of the plans to get rid of Washington eventually; for if the general officers could once be placed upon such a basis, it would only be a question of time before the position of commander-in-chief would be brought under the same regulation, if the army had lasted long enough under such an impossible arrangement. Benjamin Franklin's estimate of John Adams is still the best: "Always an honest man, sometimes a wise one, but on some occasions and about some things, absolutely out of his senses."

⁴Burnett, *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, Vol. II, p. 570.

⁵The following thunderbolt mixture of drugs was administered to the men after they had been inoculated with the virus. The quantity made up to be used for one hundred men was: six ounces calomel, two pounds Jallop, three pounds nitre Elixir. Vitriol, one pound Peruvian bark and one pound Virginia snakeroot.

⁶Washington to Congress, April 10, 1778.

⁷There are no surviving records of the number of these deaths. Each brigade apparently buried its own dead in the vicinity of its encampment and after the army left Valley Forge nearly all of the camp sites were put under cultivation by local farmers. Their plowshares scattered and destroyed all evidence of the brigade burial grounds.

CHAPTER XLVIII

¹Carmichael to C. W. F. Dumas, June 20, 1777, *Deane Papers*, New York Historical Society, Vol. II, p. 75.

²See Burnett's *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*. Further elucidation will be found in an intelligent reading of the published works of these men, making due allowance for the letters so obviously missing in these publications.

³See Washington to Joseph Reed, December 15, 1775.

⁴Burnett, *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, Vol. I, p. 517.

⁵*Connecticut Historical Society Collections*, Vol. I, p. 182.

⁶Benjamin Rush, *Diary*, February 19, 1777.

⁷Deane's mission was not only to obtain military supplies for an army of twenty-five thousand men, but to secure goods for the Indian trade in America.

⁸September 7, 1777.

⁹These extracts from the Stevens Facsimilies.

¹⁰Doniol, 2, 458, 460-69.

¹⁴After Lee's return to Virginia, from Congress, Harrison accused him to his face of plotting against Washington, but Lee denied, not only that he had done so, but that there was a clique in the Continental Congress opposed to the Commander-in-Chief. (See Lund Washington to George Washington, February 18, 1778, Washington Papers, Library of Congress. Toner Transcripts.) Even the most cursory examination of Burnett's *Letters of the Members of Congress*, during the year 1777, before R. H. Lee returned to Virginia shows it to be incredible that Lee could have been unaware of the existence of such a clique when the members of it were his close and confidential friends.

¹⁵John Bigelow, Address before the New York Historical Society, April 5, 1870.

¹⁶Washington to Gates, February 24, 1778.

¹⁷Digges-Morgan-L'Enfant Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁸The story goes that Cadwalader walked over to where Conway fell, glanced at him and remarked: "Well, I've stopped his damned lying mouth for a time anyway."

¹⁹June 7, 1778. Burnett, *Letters of Members of Congress*, Vol. III, p. 278, note.

CHAPTER XLIX

¹Hamilton to Washington, June 27, 1778.

²Continental Army Returns, No. 31 (Force Transcripts, Library of Congress).

³Lee was a retired major in the British Army and had never before in his life been faced with the necessity of maneuvering as many as five thousand men, under fire, upon a battle-field.

CHAPTER L

¹D'Estaing's instructions forbade him risking an engagement unless his ships were in fighting trim.

²Stevens Facsimiles No. 1616.

CHAPTER LI

¹Washington to William Ramsay, December, 1775.

²April 10, 1779.

CHAPTER LII

¹Some question arose the next year as to the Morristown headquarters and Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Kidder Meade, by direction of Washington, sent Mrs. Ford the following certificate: "I certify that the Commander in chief took up his quarters at Mrs. Ford's at Morristown, the first day of December, 1779, that he left there the 23d June, 1780, and that he occupied two rooms below, all the upper floor, Kitchen, Cellar and Stable. The Stable was built and the two Rooms above Stairs finished at the public expence, and a well, which was entirely useless and filled up before, put in thorough repair by walling, etc."

²A facsimile of this subscription list is in Smith & Watson's *Literary etc. Curiosities*.

³M. G. Humphreys's *Catherine Schuyler*, p. 168.

⁴This is the foundation on which has been built the die-hard story of Washington having been made a marshal of France.

⁵This second division never did sail, for the British fleet blockaded the port so strongly that it was not able to put to sea.

⁶To John Laurens, June 15, 1781.

CHAPTER LIII

¹Alluding to a passage in Colonel Laurens's letter.

²October 13, 1780.

³Clinton Memorandum, Clinton Papers; Clements Library.

⁴Doniol, Vol. IV, p. 397.

⁵Austin's *Gerry*, Vol. I, p. 276.

CHAPTER LIV

¹To Colonel John Cadwalader, October 5, 1780.

CHAPTER LV

¹Washington to Harrison, May 21, 1781.

CHAPTER LVI

¹Diaries, May 1, 1781.

²To R. R. Livingston, January 31, 1781.

³To Sullivan, February 4, 1781.

⁴March 21, 1781.

CHAPTER LVII

¹Diary, August 30, 1781.

²The strength of the American detachment that marched from Williamsburg to Yorktown is given in a general return of the Continental Army of September seventeenth, as 3,410 rank and file fit for duty, and 477 sick. This force steadily increased, as reinforcements of Virginia militia came in until on October thirteenth, the general return shows 5,482 fit for duty and 1,327 sick. The American force on the Gloucester side of the river was 680; the French force, inclusive of the troops furnished from the fleet, but exclusive of the seamen and marines belonging to the fleet itself, was about 7,000.

CHAPTER LVIII

¹Washington's Diary, October 17, 1781.

²We have the bare facts and little else of the unfortunate death of young Custis and the amount of imaginary emotion which has been gathered around these facts makes certainty difficult. We appear to have only the word of Custis's son, George Washington Parke Custis, for his father's service as a volunteer aide to Washington. Washington himself supplies the authority for the fatal illness having been contracted at the siege of Yorktown. G. W. P. Custis's *Recollections* gives two different accounts of his father's death, which vary in important details. Washington states that because of Custis's death and his remaining at Eltham for the funeral, he did not reach Mount Vernon until November thirteenth. On November sixth he had written to Congress that these matters would retard his arrival in Philadelphia a few days longer than was expected. He stayed at Mount Vernon until the twentieth. Whether he came up from Yorktown through Westmoreland and crossed over to Port Tobacco in Charles County, Maryland, or took the usual route from Williamsburg through Fredericksburg seems not to be definitely settled. As for the ball at Fredericksburg and the presence of the French officers and various other enticing details, while the account makes as pleasing reading as any of the other colorful stories recited by George Washington Parke Custis, it is practically impossible to make the recital fit known recorded facts. At least one prominent French Admiral, stated to have been there, was not in America at the time and, lest this be explained by the statement that it was a mere pen slip and that Comte De Grasse was meant, it should be remembered that De Grasse had already sailed from the Chesapeake at the date of the supposed ball.

³Printed in 1778.

CHAPTER LIX

¹Washington's circular to the states, January 31, 1782.

²Journals, April 29, 1782.

³Washington to Congress, August 19, 1782.

⁴Vergennes to Washington, July 29, 1782.

⁵Washington to Asgill, November 13, 1782.

CHAPTER LX

¹Washington to Archibald Cary, June 15, 1782.

²Washington to Tilghman, July 9, 1782.

³It has since been proved that Major John Armstrong of Pennsylvania, was the author of the anonymous addresses.

⁴Washington to Lund Washington, March 19, 1783.

CHAPTER LXI

¹To J. A. Washington, January 6, 1783.

²To Lafayette, October 12, 1783.

³An exemption of taxes had been proposed as one of the rewards.

⁴This peroration has been seized upon by thoughtless persons and, with an irresponsible addition of words at the beginning and end of the paragraph, been presented to the public as a George Washington prayer.

⁵George William Fairfax's letter, to which this was an answer, told a tale of unbelievable persecution of himself in England during the "late diabolical war." Of how, because he was an American, efforts had been made to take his property from him by designing individuals. With the coming of peace, everything had changed and he was as much courted as he had been shunned before. He "gloried," he wrote, "in being called an American." Mrs. Fairfax, hearing that Mrs. Washington was troubled with bilious fevers, "entreated her old friend to take Jones's analpactic pills" from which she had obtained relief when doctors had done her little good.

⁶Washington to Lund Washington, September 20, 1783.

CHAPTER LXIII

¹Washington to Knox, February 20, 1784.

²To Lafayette, February 1, 1784.

³Washington to Lafayette, October 30, 1783.

⁴It may interest the curious to learn that the Treasury accountants who audited Washington's expense account for the eight years of the war, found that his account did not balance by less than one dollar.

⁵To Benjamin Harrison, January 18, 1784.

⁶To James Craik, March 25, 1784.

⁷To Thomson, January 22, 1784.

⁸To Boinod & Gaillard, February 18, 1784.

⁹See Washington to Congress, January 14, 1784, and the Journals of Congress, April 30, 1784.

CHAPTER LXIV

¹Diary, September 28, 1784.

²Diary, October 4, 1784.

³Diary, August 9, 1785.

⁴The story of Houdon having taken a life-mask of Washington in plaster was started by the very cleverly phrased paragraph in the Hart-Biddle *Memoirs of the Life and Works of Jean Antoine Houdon*, which implies that such a mask was made without definitely so stating. It is extremely unlikely that anything of the kind was attempted. That Houdon made several plaster casts from his original clay model is beyond question. More than one of these casts have survived. The probability that the sculptor took back to France with him more than one cast is very strong. The completed marble, now in the state capital at Richmond, is the most satisfactory likeness of Washington we have, barring, of course, the original clay bust, now at Mount Vernon, which has been carefully treated by the most expert hands and under the advice of America's foremost sculptors, to prevent deterioration.

⁵Diary, December 22, 1785.

CHAPTER LXV

- ¹To Henry Lee, October 31, 1786.
- ²To Humphreys, December 26, 1786.
- ³To Madison, March 31, 1787.
- ⁴To Lincoln, March 23, 1787.
- ⁵To Robert Morris, April 12, 1786.
- ⁶May 10, 1786.
- ⁷To J. F. Mercer, September 9, 1786.
- ⁸To Edmund Randolph, March 28 and to Knox, April 2 & 27, 1787.
- ⁹Ledger B, 1786, October and 1793, January 29.
- ¹⁰May 15, 1796.

CHAPTER LXVI

- ¹Diary, September 19, 1787.
- ²Washington to Lafayette, April 28, 1788.
- ³Washington to Lewis, December 19, 1788.
- ⁴To Hanson, January 10, 1789.
- ⁵To H. Knox, April 1, 1789.
- ⁶To Benjamin Harrison, March 9, 1789.

CHAPTER LXVII

- ¹To Edward Rutledge, May 5, 1789.
- ²To Madison, May 12, 1789.
- ³June 15, 1790.
- ⁴To Robert R. Livingston, May 31, 1789.

CHAPTER LXVIII

- ¹To G. Morris, October 13, 1789.
- ²To Charles Pinckney, January 11, 1790.
- ³See *St. Nicholas Magazine*, March, 1925, *George Washington and Patty*, by John C. Fitzpatrick.
- ⁴To G. Morris, October 13, 1789.
- ⁵To Thomson, July 24, 1789.
- ⁶Franklin was suffering from the gravel.
- ⁷Mary Washington died at Fredericksburg, Virginia, in her 83d year.

CHAPTER LXIX

- ¹Diary, October 20, 1789.
- ²The curious activities of Jared Sparks seem to have deprived us at this point of what might have proved the most valuable political document of Washington's entire career. It is difficult to be satisfactorily definite, but the evidence so far available discloses a situation something like this. Washington intended to submit a message, or address to Congress of great length, which went into the political situation of the United States with much detail and advanced reasons for his recommendations with a freedom that would prove of inestimable value to the historian and biographer, were they now available. For reasons not yet clear, this document, which was entirely in Washington's writing and was fifty pages or more in length, was suppressed and the comparatively short address, which we have, substituted in its place. Sparks, finding that the fifty-page document had not been used and therefore, as an official paper, did not exist, felt safe in doing what he had done in other instances, notably with Washington's Diary of 1799, that is, split up the document and presented portions of it to friends and acquaintances. Several of the sheets of this valuable manuscript have survived, one of which bears a curious endorsement by Sparks. Unfortunately it seems certain that only a small percentage of the entire document will ever be recovered, but it is to be hoped that any possessor of a sheet of paper about seven by eight inches, covered on both sides with Washington's handwriting, which has neither beginning nor end but is numbered in the upper corners, in ink, by Washington, will communicate

with the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. It should be stated, of course, that the spoliation of this manuscript took place before the government acquired the Washington Papers and, therefore, there can be no question of title. The government's sole interest is in acquiring photostat copies of as many of the missing sheets as possible, that the document may be reconstructed.

¹To Mrs. Macaulay-Graham, January 9, 1790.

CHAPTER LXX

¹Tobias Lear's account.

²Journal of the proceedings of the President, April 19, 1793. Washington Papers, Library of Congress.

³To Jefferson, July 11, 1793.

⁴To William White, December 31, 1793.

⁵To Monroe, April 9, 1794.

⁶To Edmund Randolph, June 25, 1794.

⁷To Jay, August 30, 1794.

⁸To Henry Lee, August 26, 1794.

⁹To Henry Lee, August 26, 1794.

CHAPTER LXXI

¹To Hamilton, July 29, 1795.

²Forman, *Our Republic*, New York, 1922, p. 158.

³To Boston Selectmen, July 28, 1795.

⁴See Randolph to Washington, July 31 and August 3, 1795.

⁵Channing, *History of the United States*, Vol. IV, p. 144.

⁶September 27, 1795.

⁷April 4, 1796.

⁸To John Jay, May 8, 1796.

CHAPTER LXXII

¹The Address, dated September 17, 1796, appeared in the *Advertiser* of September nineteenth.

²To Knox, September 20, 1795.

³To Knox, March 2, 1797.

⁴Memoir of Bishop White, Philadelphia, 1839, p. 191.

⁵April 3, 1797.

⁶To McHenry, May 29, 1797.

⁷To Humphreys, June 26, 1797.

⁸To Oliver Wolcott, May 15, 1797.

⁹To John Marshall, December 4, 1797.

¹⁰To Bushrod Washington, August 12, 1798.

¹¹April 20, 1799.

CHAPTER LXXIII

¹An eminent American historian characterizes Washington's comments on Monroe's *View* as one of the few documents wherein Washington does not seem to be entirely disingenuous. This is misleading, as the only point at issue is that Monroe disregarded his instructions, exceeded them and made the fatal mistake of advancing his private personal views in lieu of his official instructions. Such a course is impossible for a diplomat engaged in a delicate negotiation. The result was increased difficulty for the nation instead of a removal of misunderstanding.

²May 27, 1798.

³To Alexander Hamilton, May 27, 1798.

⁴July 25, 1798.

⁵August 9, 1798.

⁶September 25, 1798.

⁷Tobias Lear's account of Washington's death.

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